

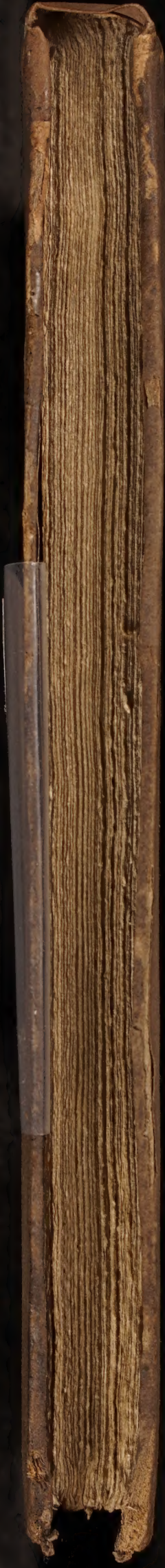
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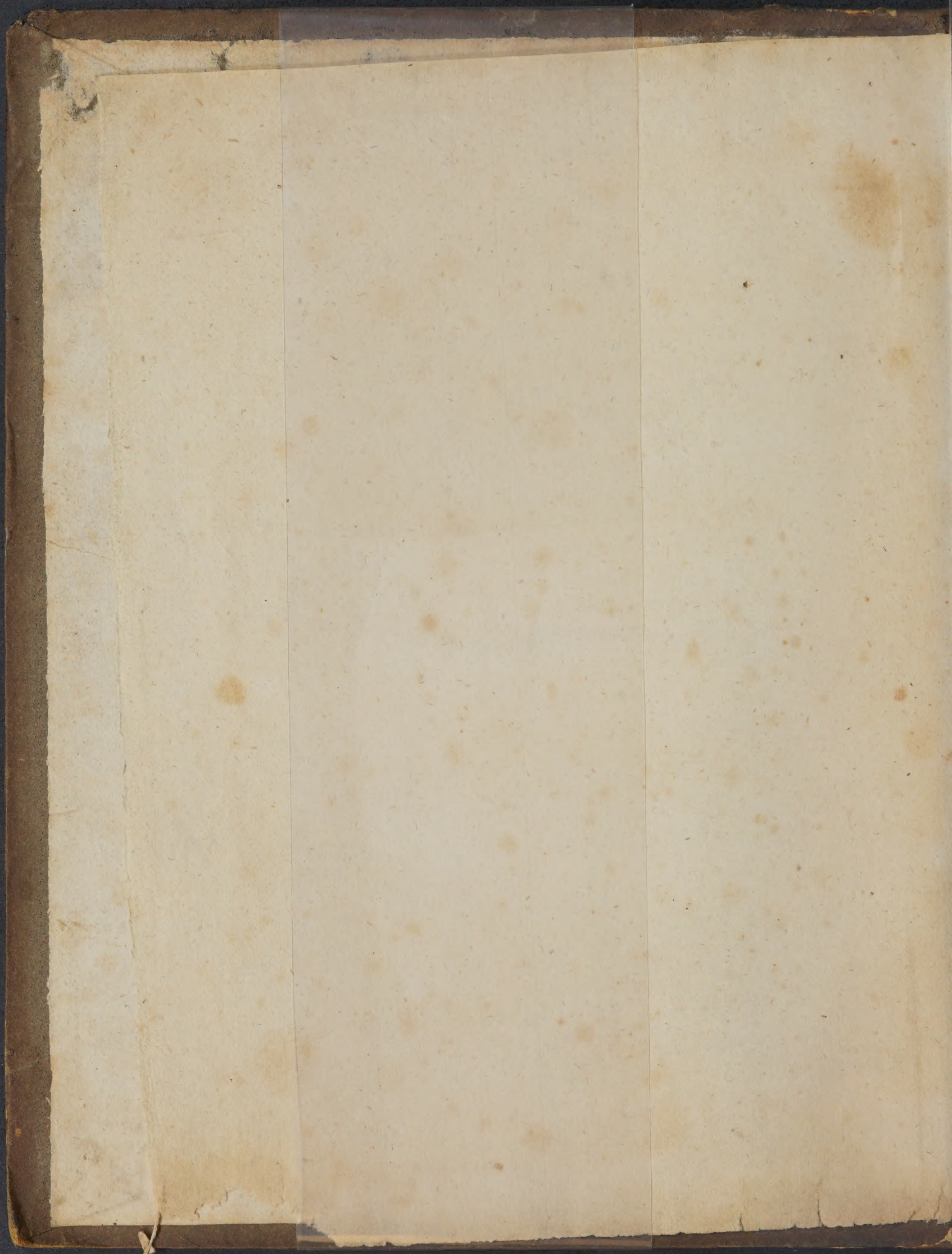
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POET'S
PILGRIM
- AGE
-
PAYNE
COLLIER









J. Payne Collier

THE
POET'S PILGRIMAGE:

AN ALLEGORICAL POEM,

IN
FOUR CANTOS.

By J. PAYNE COLLIER.

But how shall I, apprentice of the skill
That whilom in divinest wits did reign,
Presume so high to stretch my humble quill?

SPENSER'S *F.* 2. INTR. to B. III.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR SEPTIMUS PROWETT, OLD BOND-STREET.

M.DCCC.XXV.

TO THE READER

Ich singe wie der Vogel singt,

Der in den Zweigen wohnet ;

Das Lied, das aus der Kehle dringt,

Ist Lohn der reichlich lohnet.

GOETHE'S *Gedichte*.

TO THE READER.

THE author cannot pretend to say with experienced Jonson, that "he knows the strength of his own Muse;" but if he were not, as Milton expresses it, "fed with cheerful and confident thoughts," that there is something in the ensuing pages that deserves to be known beyond the circulation of a manuscript, they would never have been published. "Things in print," says the author of John Bunce, "must stand by their own worth."

Whatever be his merits or defects, this praise at least the author may claim—that he has attempted one of the noblest kinds of poetry: his aim has been lofty; and if, according to the old figure, the arrow, instead of reaching the mark, fall and wound his own breast, he will have only to blame his own

"Penna infelice è mal gradito ingegno."

He is aware that his matter and his style are not taking. He never endeavoured to make them so, for his object has never been in this to become a popular poet: had he tried, he might have failed, and have only the words of Owen Feltham to console him: "He is the best orator that pleaseth all;—but that poetry would be poor which all should approve."

His subject he acknowledges is old, as old as poetry itself; and though some modern instances may appear to contradict him, yet if those poets have grown rich, it is not their poetry, properly so called, that has made them so.

As far as regards the stanza and some few points of the general design, the author is an imitator; "one who steers by others' maps, and can therefore make no new discoveries:" but in other respects he follows no precursor, and "sails in untried seas." Davenant, whom he quotes, broke off his great poem in the middle of the third book, because "he was threatened with death, which, even in the innocent, might beget a gravity that diverts the music of verse." The author has stopped short in his voyage, merely because it was his pleasure, and because he thought it might be the pleasure of the reader. Though *Purgatory* and *Paradise* yet remain, the portion now printed is complete in itself, and people may be found to get through four cantos who would be lothe to undertake twelve.

Having said all he thinks necessary by way of preface, he concludes with one of old Chaucer's *Envoy*s:

- " Go, littel boke, God send thee good passage!
- " Chuse well thy way, be simple of manere:
- " Looke thy clothing be like thy pilgrimage;
- " And specially let this be thy prayere
- " Unto them all that will thee read or heare:—
- " Where thou art wrong, after their help to call
- " Thee to correct in any part or all."

To C. L.

CHARLES, to your liberal censure I commit
This book, of which I say with judgment cool
'Tis worth an hour. I were too gross a fool
Not to think that, for I have printed it.
You'll haply prize my poem, and 'tis fit,
Because it emulates the antique school;
Is written on that model, plan, and rule:
Not that it owns its vigour, fancy, wit.
But if you like it I am well content;
'Tis easy to approve it more than I;
And while you read the young-old trifle sent,
Can no one better its worst wants supply.
This is the reason why the wise relent,
And genius judges with such charity.

J. P. C.

To W. P. E.

'TIS now eleven years since first I wrote
A sonnet to you, long perhaps thrown by,
Where Milton's sacred words I dar'd to quote,
That "something which the world would not let die,"
Or not at least resign it "willingly,"
He thought to pen.—I did but fondly doat,
'Twas sanguine youth's presumptuousness when I
Breath'd the same hope.—See now my little boat
That I have launch'd on wide and fearful seas !
Ill furnish'd is it for the voyage before,
Without or rudder, compass, sail, or oar,
To drift at mercy of the wave and breeze.
'Tis gone ! I cannot call it back to shore ;
I can but watch it now, though ill at ease.

J. P. C.

ARIOSTO'S LAUREL*.

FROM HIS CAPITOLI AMOROSI.

IN that sweet season when 'twas spring-time still,
 A laurel slip I set with careful hand
 On a small plain half up an easy hill.
 Fortune smiled on it; the fresh air was bland;
 The sun upon it shone most brightly too,
 Both from the Indian and the Moorish strand.
 Refreshing streams with patient zeal I drew
 To where it stood, their grassy banks between,
 And brought to it the earth where first it grew.
 It faded not—its leaves a cheerful green
 Still wore; and to reward my care and toil,
 It took new root, and soon fresh buds were seen.
 Nor nature strove my earnest hopes to foil,
 But breath'd benignant on my rising tree,
 Which seem'd to flourish in a genial soil.
 Sweet, lonely, faithful bowers it made for me,
 Within whose shade I pour'd the complaints of love
 From my fond heart, while none could hear or see.
 Venus oft-times forsook her seat above,
 And Citherean fanes, where odours sweet
 Of gums and rich Sabeian spices strove,
 The rose-link'd Graces on this spot to meet;
 And while the Loves above them plied the wing,
 Danc'd round my laurel with unwearied feet.

* Printed by the author in the first number of the New Series of the *London Magazine*.

Thither Diana her chaste Nymphs would bring ;
 For she preferr'd my laurel to all those
 That in the woods of Erymanthus spring.
 Other fair Deities its shadow chose
 To spend the sultry day in cool delight,
 Blessing the hand that placed it where it rose.—
 Whence came the early tempest thus to blight
 My tree so loved? and whence the pinching cold
 That covered it with snows untimely, white?
 Ah! why did Heav'n its favouring smile withhold?—
 My laurel droop'd—its foliage green was reft,
 A bare bleak trunk it rose from barren mould!
 Still one small branch with few pale leaves is left,
 And between hope and fear I still exist
 Lest even of that rude winter should make theft.
 Yet fear prevails—hope is well nigh dismiss'd,
 That bitter frosts, not yet I fear me o'er,
 This last and weakly spray can ne'er resist.—
 And are there none to teach me how, before
 The sickly root itself is quite decay'd,
 Its former vigorous life I may restore?
 Phœbus, by whom the heavenly signs are sway'd,
 By whom in Thessaly a laurel crown
 So oft was borne, now lend this tree thine aid!
 Vertumnus and Pomona both look down,
 Bacchus, Nymphs, Satires, Fawns, and Dryads fair,
 On this my tree, o'er which the seasons frown!
 And all ye Deities, that have in care
 The woods and forests, bend a favouring eye
 Towards my laurel!—I its fate will share;
 Living I live with it, or dying die.

THE POET'S PILGRIMAGE.

CANTO I.

IGNOTO on a grassy hill

Meets with a PILGRIM grey,

Who from a poet's meedless life

To wean him doth essay.

I.

HIGH in the east the sun of July shone,
Upland and valley steaming with the heat:
On a hill's grassy side I lay alone,
O'ercanopied by elms, while at my feet
Well'd ever forth a brooklet, noisy, fleet,
That from a fissure in the hill did play,
And joy'd from its dark deep the light to greet;
Dancing and laughing all its merry way,
Like a glad prisoner 'scap'd to freedom and to day.

B

II.

A little on it reach'd a precipice—

A precipice to it, so small a brook—

O'er which it fell. The flowers made haste to kiss

The leaping waves, and many kisses took,

As if they lov'd upon themselves to look,

And own their shadows in the waters fair:

Then having kiss'd, tears from their bright eyes shook
To see the stream away their beauty bear;
Then kiss'd and kiss'd again to see it still was there.

III.

Often and often have I watch'd this stream,

And thought it never could be watch'd too long;

Often and often in some sweet day-dream

Have thought its murmur its blithe spirit's song:

Then fancied it some torrent, bounding strong,

And I a pigmy that my stand would take,

To mark the cataract that pour'd along

Down the steep precipice, and then did make

A basin for itself—a wide swift-eddy lake.

IV.

Beyond this brooklet was the green hill's side,
 Broken by shrubs thick cluster'd here and there;
 And further still, a glorious prospect wide
 Of hill and vale, clad with the browning ear;
 Set off by darksome wood and waters clear,
 And tufted hedge-rows crossing the green lea :
 Onward, more dim through the blue atmosphere,
 Were swelling downs of high and low degree,
 And the bright view was ended by the endless sea.

V.

Yet was not all in equal brightness clad,
 For morning clouds slow floating o'er the sky,
 The dazzling sunny ray at times forbad
 On some broad districts of the plain to lie :
 Yet was it not less beauteous made thereby,
 For sun and shade were in fit contrast seen,
 And mix'd the whole in one wide harmony :
 Here rose a hill that shone in liveliest green,
 While moving shades embrown'd the cultured lands between.

VI.

And all was full of joy and vigorous life,
 For who or what could sorrow at that hour ?
 A beaming pleasure over all was rife,
 Still pouring down from heaven in a shower.
 The loftiest forest tree, the lowliest flower
 Possess, like man, the sense of happiness :
 The " builder oak²," huge type of age and power,
 Murmurs its pleasure to the breeze ; nor less
 The daisy's eye pays back her infant thankfulness.

VII.

Things merely senseless, or but seeming so,
 All in their kind the general joy partake :
 The barren rocks return a ruddier glow,
 The very stones some sign of gladness make,
 And all their cheerful varied colours wake :
 The river dances t'ward the sail-speck'd firth,
 And sunny smiles play on the dappled lake :
 Land, water, sky, all join in common mirth,
 And earth is like to heav'n, and heav'n is like to earth !

VIII.

There is a music far beyond the sound
 Of instruments, though touch'd with featliest skill;
 Harmony breathing from the heav'n-blest ground,
 As wavering vapours from the dewy hill:
 It feeds the heart and eyes when all is still;
 More felt than seen, and more, I ween, inspires
 Than sounds that through the moon's blue beams distil
 On the far ear from high monastic quires,
 Lighted at midnight hour with dim religious fires.

IX.

Such music knows he who enjoys a heart
 Soft to the touch of beauty—most of all
 To that which kindly Nature doth impart
 To all her works, or be they great or small;
 For Nature's works are ever musical:
 And while I sat upon the green hill's side,
 Watching the little brooklet's flow and fall,
 Or looking on the gladsome prospect wide,
 To my sight-listening heart that music sweet did glide.

X.

“ Would that this prospect I might never quit,”
I cried, “ but dream a joyous life away ;
“ Marking the flow’rets bloom, the waters flit,
“ And trees to burgeon green from day to day,
“ Until with them I felt myself decay :
“ For what have I to do with worldling’s strife ?
“ Oh ! let them fade or flourish as they may,
“ I have enough where pleasure is so rife :
“ Here let me spend my days, here let me end my life’ !”

XI.

“ And what art thou ? and why in idleness
“ Art thou to live ?” a hoarse low voice replied.
Wond’ring I turn’d, and there in russet dress,
I saw an ancient Pilgrim at my side ;
His figure gaunt—his shoulders square and wide,
That seem’d unbow’d the weight of years to bear ;
And me with piercing steady gaze he eyed
Under his hanging brows, while silver hair
Flow’d largely ’neath his hat, and floated on the air.

XII.

There was about his look, although severe,
Something that confidence and love invited;
Not haughty, nor forbidding, nor austere,
Yet most majestic: as grief had blighted
The blossoms of his youth, and thus benighted,
In pilgrim's weed he wander'd far and near.
In his dark eye there dwelt a fire that lighted
His time-worn visage, where deep lines appear
Of thought intense, and furrows plough'd by many a tear.

XIII.

He seem'd as one that in his youth had past
Through all the life of some imperial court,
And thus his gallant days had run to waste
Mid knightly courtesies and regal sport;
'Till in his full career of joy cut short,
While favour sought him and bright beauty smil'd,
By some calamity that did distort
His after life, though borne with firmness mild;
A gracious temple hurl'd at once to ruin wild.

XIV.

As some fair tree fast by a broad lake's side
Uplifts to heav'n its high aspiring head,
And throws its grasping arms in vigorous pride
Far o'er the land, into the waters' bed,
Its dipping branches to their shades to wed,
Courting and courted by the breezes bland,
Which the jagg'd lightning strikes; and then instead
Of lightsome leaves, that gladden water, land,
Its scathed trunk and arms a mournful mockery stand.

XV.

Yet still it stands erect, though rent and torn,
A monument of majesty and might;
And here and there, to make it less forlorn,
Its riven trunk is not forsaken quite
By lively green; some buds still burgeon bright
Where not deserted by the sap and rind;
To cheer its woe they take a sad delight:
So with this seer, whom age had not inclin'd,
Some trace of former state was left, methought, behind.

XVI.

Both his broad hands upon his staff did rest,
 Polish'd by constant use from year to year ;
 So tall, it rose full midway up his breast,
 Whereon our Saviour's cross did plain appear :
 His limbs, as I could judge them through his gear,
 Seem'd fair of mould, but journeying o'er the soil
 Had squar'd the joints of graceful turn whilere ;
 His features nobly form'd, though care and toil
 Had made their early bloom an unresisting spoil.

XVII.

“ And what art thou? and why in idleness
 “ Art thou to live?”—I heard without a start
 The sounds that came in such still gentleness,
 That they sank warmly to my lowest heart,
 Nor from my memory will they e'er depart :
 The voice was musical, yet low and deep—
 So low and deep, it seem'd at first a part
 Of the dull murmur wood and waters keep,
 When underneath the leaves the amorous zephyrs creep.

XVIII.

Yet being articulate, I turn'd and saw
That Pilgrim grey : the sight might well astound ;
Nor could I then my fixed eyes withdraw,
Nor lift me prostrate from the clinging ground.
There seem'd some strange enchantment in the sound
Of his deep voice, that all my senses took :
Still on his rev'rend face my eyes were bound,
And pored upon it as it were a book,
And he still cast on me a mild upbraiding look.

XIX.

And though he silent stood, he seem'd to speak
A thousand things my idless to reprove :
At length a brighter flush came o'er his cheek,
And now I saw his lips begin to move.
“ Son,” said the seer, “ and wherefore dost thou love
“ To linger slothful on this grassy hill ?
“ Will watching earth, or sea, or skies above,
“ Perform the task that thou hast to fulfil ?
“ Will lying here inert perform of Heav'n the will ?”

XX.

He paus'd, as though he wish'd from me to draw
 Some answer : I still gaz'd upon his face
 With love, with reverence and pious awe,
 But speak I could not: twice within that space
 I strove in vain. Then sterner looks gave place,
 And in his eye so bland a smile had birth,
 That cloudy fears this sunshine put to chase :
 If erst I deem'd him more than mortal worth,
 His heav'nly smile confirm'd he could not be mere earth.

XXI.

" Fear not!" he cried in mellowest tone, akin
 To that benignant smile his visage wore,
 That would dead silence force amid the din
 Of howling fiends, as Dante told of yore ;
 " Fear not, my son ;—arise, and look before !"

I rose and look'd ; and now the prospect green
 Of hill and vale and wood was known no more ;
 Black bursting clouds had roll'd themselves between,
 Threat'ning to deluge deep that once sun-lighted scene.

XXII.

The mountain where we stood full high ascended
Above the storm, which spread so wide below
That o'er the angry ocean it extended :
Still upon us the hot sun cast a glow,
That made the darken'd vale still darker show.
I heard the thunder roll beneath our feet,
Then burst in wrath, and murmuring distant low
Retire exhaust. I watch'd in wonder great,
Till now the wind compell'd the unwieldy storm retreat.

XXIII.

And as the clouds grew thinner I could hear
The busy hum of some huge peopled town :
Now through the mist high gilded vanes appear,
And now the domes and spires themselves are shown,
As glittering islands on a sea thick-sown ;
And now the tops of temples and of towers
Rise dimly through the air still purer grown ;
The palaces of kings and lordly bowers,
Fill'd all with regal state, and pomp of martial powers.

XXIV.

And lower still was many a humbler dwelling
Of active citizens, a smoking throng;
And now I mark'd a noble river swelling,
Rolling majestic its tide along,
Travers'd by many bridges, wide and strong,
Wedding the southern to the northern shore.
Thousands of vessels at their anchors swung,
Which on his breast this lordly river bore
From every distant clime man's voyages explore.

XXV.

And now the sun in vivid splendour shone
On this proud city—city proud and fair:
The domes and tapering spires, the towers of stone,
All glitter'd in the pure transparent air,
And seem'd to feel a joy in being there.
Was nothing but was bright in their degrees,
The lowliest dwellings the rich sunshine wear,
Ships spread their dazzling canvas to the breeze,
And sail like lessening stars out on the dark blue seas.

XXVI.

Methought more glorious sight eye ne'er beheld.

The rural scene of water, wood, and plain
I late admir'd, from memory was expell'd,

Or but dim traces now behind remain:

Yet round this city spread a wide champaign
Of richly cultivated dale and hill,

Sprinkled with dwellings fair. The frequent wain,
The browsing herds, the flocks that roam'd at will,
All moving, join'd at once this living scene to fill.

XXVII.

All we survey'd bespoke activity;

Bustle and business reign'd the city through;
The streets were crowded, as I well could see

Even from that height: all men intent pursue

Some several aim. In other parts my view

Was ta'en by pompous shows and triumphs rare;

Levies of horse and foot, as to subdue

A haughty foe; while many a palace fair

Pour'd forth its glittering dwellers in the sunny air.

XXVIII.

Silent and lost I gaz'd, but soon I turn'd
 Toward the aged Pilgrim: he the while
 Some pleasure-busy youngers had discern'd
 Joying in meadows green, and with a smile
 He watch'd their sport through every antic wile.
 Thus paus'd he long, and sympathetic joy
 Seem'd of his age the sorrows to beguile:
 I would not with a word that calm destroy,
 But fix'd my eyes on that which did his thoughts employ.

XXIX.

At length he spoke: "Mark you those infants blithe;
 "Unthinking sport is both their debt and dower—
 "Blossoms that dream not of Time's sweeping scythe:
 "'Tis theirs t'enjoy the sunshine of the hour,
 "Yet work unconscious by Almighty power
 "The high decrees:—each has his task assign'd,
 "And still performs it or in shine or shower,
 "Here on this sward as much as when confin'd
 "To low mechanic art, and by the sick air pin'd.

XXX.

“ Then look within this city’s lengthen’d wall,
“ And note each man upon his labours bent;
“ You see not their designs, yet busy all:
“ Some lowly aim—some breathe a high intent,
“ And scorn the works that grov’ling minds invent :
“ Some toil by intellect and some by hand,
“ And unto all a differing mean is lent;
“ But none in sloth and dreaming idless stand—
“ Wise, ignorant, old, young, fulfil high Heav’n’s command.

XXXI.

“ But thou upon the green hill laid supine,
“ What is thy task ? how dost thou it perform ?
“ All that thou seest should make this lesson thine,
“ That not in vain created is the worm :
“ All things devoid of instinct to inform
“ Have still their uses—things devoid of sense;
“ The arching rocks give shelter in the storm,
“ The trees have shade against the heat intense,
“ And living waters flow their freshness to dispense.”

XXXII.

I felt his weighty voice, and fix'd my eyes
 Full on his countenance, and there I saw
 All that could make me deem him good and wise:
 Nothing of dread I knew, though silent awe
 Still kept me gazing, nor could I withdraw
 My sight, that busy town to look upon;
 Yet feeling I had fram'd myself a law,
 And had a lofty purpose—nobler none—
 I thus erect replied, though in submissive tone:

XXXIII.

“ Father, I cannot read the will of Heaven
 “ As clearly as thou canst, yet still I deem
 “ My blameless purpose need not be forgiven.
 “ 'Tis not that I my life away would dream
 “ In uselessness inert—a nobler scheme
 “ I inly frame—a higher aim I take:
 “ And though upon this hill I idle seem,
 “ Yet even here my better powers awake,
 “ To do the work of Heaven that I will ne'er forsake!”

XXXIV.

Methought I read compassion in his eye,
 And in the smile that he upon me cast
 Much more of pity than contempt. Thereby
 Abash'd I stood, and fix'd my eyeballs fast
 Upon the ground. A thousand feelings past
 Across my mind, but this most chilly came—
 That he my purpose read from first to last,
 And thus would check me for my desperate aim
 Directed at the stars—a poet's deathless name!

XXXV.

"I know thy thoughts, young poet, yet forbear,"
 He said; "and let me warn thee ere too late.
 "Chuse not a life of penury and care;
 "Make not thyself the sport of time and fate.
 "Thou hold'st thy purpose at too high a rate,
 "Ev'n though thy genius could command success:
 "An active life will best become thy state,
 "A life of industry and usefulness,
 "And at thy hands will Heaven expect nor more nor less."

XXXVI.

“ Ah! rev'rend sire,” I cried, “ full well I know
“ That in this mortal life a poet's meed
“ Is often cold neglect and bitter woe,
“ Contempt, and finger-pointing scorn and need:
“ Yet all these sufferings should ne'er impede
“ My progress to that goal far-glittering bright,
“ Did I but feel that inward strength indeed
“ To reach it at the last: there with delight
“ I would lay up my soul above the world's despite.

XXXVII.

“ He is not worthy of a poet's name
“ Who cannot scorn and woe and want despise;
“ Who cannot glory in his after fame,
“ And that dear hope above all blessings prize!
“ This is no life where day by day he dies—
“ This mortal span: he lives in after times,
“ When fate a bare cold memory denies
“ To all who once contemn'd his powerful rhimes;
“ Unless they live for aye, immortal in their crimes!

XXXVIII.

“ And is it come, sweet Poesy, to this,
 “ That in our age, and in this happy land,
 “ Which to its poets owes its chiefest bliss,
 “ Thy usefulness men cannot understand;
 “ Foster’d as thou hast been by Heaven’s hand!
 “ The nurse of heroes, the reward of kings!
 “ Art above art—the example and the band
 “ That knits low earthly with celestial things;
 “ From whence all virtue, wisdom, honour, freedom springs⁴ ?”

XXXIX.

While thus I spoke this wild apostrophy
 With earnest tone and gesture void of art,
 And warmth so truly token’d by my eye,
 The hoary Pilgrim seem’d to feel a part
 Ev’n of the burning love that from my heart
 Flow’d in a torrent; for I could behold
 A light celestial o’er his visage dart,
 That made him seem no longer grey and old,
 But features of fresh youth and beauty’s beam unfold.

XL.

Whether it were my fancy or the truth

I could not tell; he then look'd most divine:

If thus he could assume and doff his youth,

It was strange proof of power most subtle fine.—

But as I look'd, his youthful charms decline,

At least in my weak sight; and now again

By slow degrees I mark'd his face resign

Its heavenly lustre, and behind remain

The deep-indented lines of age, of thought and pain.

XLI.

Yet still his look was cheerful, though not bright;

But as I watch'd, methought I could discern,

Little and little as it lost its light,

The cheerful turn'd to grave, the grave to stern:

The reason for this change I fear'd to learn.

He spoke of idle hopes, of time misspent,

Of fruitless works for the gross world to spurn;

Of young presumptuousness in high intent,

And still to active use his thoughts were ever bent.

XLII.

“ What saith that bard,” he cried, “ for thou canst tell,
 “ The first great lustre of a dusky age;
 “ Of Purgatory, Paradise, and Hell,
 “ Who wrote in fearful, joyful, hopeless page,
 “ Whiles he an active warfare long did wage
 “ With his friends’ foes?—‘ Not upon beds of down,
 “ ‘ Nor ’neath luxurious canopies to ’suage
 “ ‘ The noonday heat, is won that bright renown
 “ ‘ That our brief mortal life to endless date should crown⁵.’ ”

XLIII.

“ But not the strife ’twixt Guelf and Ghibbeline,
 “ Nor what he suffer’d by it,” I replied,
 “ Have liv’d coeval with that powerful line,
 “ Where ‘ by his spirit he is deified⁶;’
 “ Spreading his fame through all creation wide.
 “ That shall survive bright Florence and old Rome,
 “ Ravenna’s glory, and Venetian pride:
 “ All else he shows in his undying tome,
 “ ‘ Is but as smoke in air, or as the salt sea foam⁷.’ ”

XLIV.

- “ Canst thou forget,” he answer’d, “ how that bard
 “ Was once insulted in Verona’s court?
 “ A ribald jester met his lord’s regard,
 “ While the great Dante was his scorn and sport;
 “ ‘ For vulgar souls still love the vulgar sort⁸.’
 “ Canst thou forget what Tasso long endured,
 “ The victim of intrigue and base report,
 “ For poesy?—And all long since allured
 “ To yield to that disease that never can be cured?

XLV.

- “ I go not back to days of Greece and Rome,
 “ I quote not Æschylus’ nor Ovid’s fate;
 “ Mark but the lot of poets born at home—
 “ Contempt and pity of a world ingrate!
 “ See him who could that lofty theme dilate
 “ Of our first parents’ fall, die poor, unknown:
 “ He who of antique knights the fell debate
 “ Told in his Faerie Queene, starv’d all alone,
 “ While courtly slaves withheld the tribute from a throne⁹!”

XLVI.

I answer'd thus: " Such men thou need not name,
" Nor what they suffer'd for the Muses' sake:
" They died in beggary, but their after fame
" An ample glorious recompence will make!
" If me thou wouldst deter, such course forsake,
" And back recal some miserable wight,
" Who his ambition did for power mistake;
" And thought, because he long'd to reach the height,
" That he had strength of wing for such a perilous flight.

XLVII.

" This chilling anxious thought has oft deterr'd
" Efforts the best resolv'd, the noblest plann'd:
" Many have heeded not rewards deferr'd
" If at the last, when run was all life's sand,
" Mankind would place them mid the glorious band
" Of poets true. Few mental pangs are worse,
" Than first in hope o'er new-penn'd lines to stand,
" While blank distrust creeps slowly in to curse
" The self-deluded wretch, and time misspent in verse!

XLVIII.

- “ Yet hope returns, again returns distrust,
 “ Alternate spring and winter of the mind.
 “ At length the sentence on himself, unjust
 “ Th’ aspirant deems;—resolves to leave behind
 “ All low pursuits to vulgar souls and blind:
 “ Then humbly turns his grateful thoughts to Heaven,
 “ Content, that though his brows no wreath may bind,
 “ He can procure delights from morn ’till even,
 “ Such as to worldly hearts have never yet been given¹⁰.

XLIX.

- “ Delights of poesy, how true, how pure!
 “ What equals the free raptures it bestows?
 “ If poet’s pains are exquisite, be sure
 “ Ev’n then a double recompence he knows.
 “ If he succeed in the bright path he chose,
 “ He feels deep gratitude for all his pain,
 “ And back recalls with joy his ‘ labour’d throes.’
 “ Let me be meanest of the Muses’ train,
 “ I hope—I ask no more—I would not ask in vain!

L.

“ Thus then thou know’st me well!—Succeed or fail,
 “ Here have I fix’d my thoughts, my hope, my heart:
 “ Misfortune, poverty, diseases pale,
 “ May follow me, and haply ne’er depart;
 “ To love the Muse will still relieve the smart;
 “ Or if that were not all I dared to ask,
 “ It forms of poets’ bliss one chiefest part:—
 “ In sunshine of high future fame to bask
 “ Is theirs, ‘ by nature’s power drawn to this genial task¹¹!’ ”

LI.

With strenuous diffidence against the stream
 Of his tongue-music thus I kept my stand;
 For sure I knew I had a glorious theme!
 I cited ancient bards of English land,
 Who bade the sphere of knowledge wide expand,
 And gave ensample to our later day.—
 But these are matters now too often scann’d
 On them to need that I should here delay,
 Or tell how he essay’d my reasons to gainsay.

LII.

At length when he well saw, that firmly still
 I would persevere in that best pursuit,
 And my strong love would urge through good and ill,
 Against despite, contempt, and foul repute,
 For a short space he gaz'd upon me mute;
 Not seeming wrath that his advice had failed,
 But with a look of love and grief acute,
 That his divine forewarning nought availed
 To turn me from that path which following thousands wailed.

LIII.

At last he spoke:—" Good son, thy ardent zeal
 " I well perceive; and since by argument
 " I cannot now persuade thee to thy weal,
 " I will essay by sad experiment;
 " That thou by seeing may at length repent.
 " Full many a year have I now journey'd o'er
 " This woful world in lonely dreriment,
 " And, if thou wilt, with me thou shalt explore
 " The truth of all those griefs that I have taught before.

LIV.

“ Right well I know the ways of selfish men ;
 “ Indeed but few are gifted to admire,
 “ And fewer still will aid the poet’s pen,
 “ Though it inscribe in characters of fire:—
 “ I cannot wonder that thou should’st aspire,
 “ Ambitious, inexperienced in their ways:
 “ But disappointment waits on high desire;
 “ Or if thou hast the power high themes to raise,
 “ Thy portion will be still cold pity—colder praise!”

LV.

“ I fear it not,” I hastily exclaim;
 “ I am prepar’d to dare and bear the worst!
 “ Would but endurance make me worthy fame,
 “ There is no ill by which our nature’s curst,
 “ But I to court its suffering would be first!
 “ Remember, father, that I bear a breast
 “ In the hard school of disappointment nurst,
 “ And till I reach the goal ’twill never rest:
 “ Till then the worst of fate shall be to me the best!”

LVI.

“ Then follow me, bold youth !” the Pilgrim said :
 “ Thy speech is confident, but if thy heart
 “ Be not of purest, richest metal made,
 “ Thou may’st remain—’tis useless to depart.
 “ Trials ’twill have will make it deeply smart :
 “ If thou retreat, better thou’dst ne’er been born ;
 “ Death cannot aid thee with his mortal dart !
 “ Turn back, and thou from every hope art torn—
 “ Living thou meet’st contempt, and dying endless scorn !”

LVII.

“ Lead on !” I cried.—He took me by the hand,
 And we turn’d quickly from the city’s sight,
 And from the mountain whereon we did stand,
 Towards a wood that lay upon our right.
 And now the sun declining from his height,
 On ocean’s breast disspread his golden hair ;
 While from the east the car of dusky night
 Slowly advanc’d o’er every object there,
 Mingling in one dark mass all that was once so fair.

LVIII.

Save that the river's course you still could mark,
Reflecting back the lustre of the sky,
Bearing a tide of light into the dark,
Yet still no lighter made the dark thereby.
When from the town we turn'd our parting eye,
The sunshine faintly ting'd each gilded vane;
The rook belated sail'd with far-heard cry
High overhead, crossing the purple plain
Of heaven, whereon still clouds in golden streaks remain.

END OF THE FIRST CANTO.

CANTO II.

To FORTUNE's glorious palace now

The YOUTH and PILGRIM haste ;

But are disparted in the night

On DISAPPOINTMENT's waste.

I.

WE gain'd the wood ere long. The brushwood small
 Tangled the narrow-winding path we trode;
 The arching trees ascended over all,
 In which the rooks had built their thick abode,
 And balancing on limber branches rode,
 With ceaseless din greeting their mates' return.
 With doubtful step now kept we on our road,
 For here the day was done, and we discern
 Through outlets overhead the heav'nly fires to burn.

II.

Ere long 'twas thickest night; yet still my guide
Mov'd on with vigorous step, and nothing spoke.
The path sometimes was open, straight, and wide,
As well as I could judge, for no light broke
On any side; nor noise, unless we woke
The night-perch'd wood-pigeon with sounding wing,
Or rous'd the leveret with our footsteps' stroke,
And cracking of young branches, when they cling
To stop our progress through, then sever'd backward spring.

III.

Fearless I follow'd—what had I to fear,
Though all unknown the road we then pursue?
I could not dream of any danger near
With such a reverend guide, who had a clue
In ways most intricate to lead him through:
His gracious presence would have had the power
To chase all noxious ravenous beasts from view.
Sudden methought I heard the midnight hour
Borne on the stilly night from some high distant tower.

IV.

He paus'd a moment at the wafted sound :

“ 'Tis well,” he cried, then on again he leads—
 “ Our weary feet a resting place have found
 “ When we have gain'd the structure whence proceeds
 “ That echoing sound, and all our various needs
 “ Will be supplied.”—I joy'd to hear him speak,
 And to hear what he spoke : fatigue now pleads
 In me for rest, for toil had made me weak,
 And with reviving cheer with him that tower I seek.

V.

We journey'd on another tedious hour ;
 Again the bell struck on our vacant ear,
 Sounding indeed from that same lofty tower,
 But now the stroke was vigorous and clear,
 Not faint and distant as it was whilere.
 Quitting the thick wood, on a plain we 'light,
 Where straight before my wondering eyes appear
 Thousands of torches streaking the dark night,
 Streaming from windows vast of some huge palace bright.

VI.

Was not a window in the extended pile
 But forth there shot long lances of bright beams :
 Lofty the structure rose ; for many a mile
 The hills and woods were tinged with the gleams
 Of the red light, aye pouring out in streams.
 My eyes to mark its splendour scarce endure :
 It seem'd as if created in the dreams
 Of young enthusiasts.—I, almost unsure
 Whether I slept or woke, turn'd to my guide demure.

VII.

“ Say, holy Pilgrim, what this glorious frame,
 “ Whose night-insulting fires fatigue my eyes?”—
 “ It is the palace of a royal dame,”
 The seer replied, “ a queen, whose kingdom lies
 “ O'er all the world ; whom earthly monarchs prize
 “ Above their crowns—by her their crowns they hold :
 “ Whom not the meanest subject dare despise,
 “ Since she dispenses empires, honours, gold,
 “ And he who reigns a king may be her bond-slave sold.

VIII.

- " Fortune she is, that mighty emperess,
 " To whom the greatest princes abject bow :
 " Myriads of subjects to her throne address
 " Unceasing prayers, and breathe the ready vow ;
 " To whom the Pagans temples built^{1 2}, but now
 " She has a fane in every human heart,
 " Who, for her favours, care not where nor how :
 " This is her palace, bright in every part,
 " Buildd by lavish waste, and stuff'd by wanton art.

IX.

- " Here is her court, and here she entertains
 " Her followers from all quarters of the world :
 " None are rejected from her ample trains ;
 " And even those from highest honours hurl'd
 " Creep to her footstool bright, begemm'd, impearl'd :
 " The habitant of every clime is here,
 " From the sledg'd Iceman to the Afric curl'd ;
 " All in their several modes and shapes appear,
 " Whether in the Eastern born, or Western hemisphere.

X.

“ Thus is her palace crowded day and night,
“ For day and night they still on Fortune wait ;
“ And day and night it is her sole delight
“ To accept the homage both of small and great.
“ Her honours she dispenses early, late,
“ And scorning to abase her eyes to ground,
“ She careless scatters gifts about her state
“ With liberal hand to those who bend around ;
“ Yet his not always most who is most servile found.

XI.

“ For some there are, and frequent is the proof,
“ Who crouching abjectly and basely down,
“ Miss many favours; while those more aloof,
“ Watching with anxiousness her smile or frown,
“ Catch what above those supple backs is thrown.
“ These stop her largess to the nobler kind,
“ Save accident may make some gift their own ;
“ While modest merit, standing far behind,
“ And seeing not so clear, imagines Fortune blind.”—

XII.

“ Alas! good father, then what hope have we

“ Repose or cheer in that high place to gain?”—

He answer'd not. More clearly now I see

The wide-spread structure on that torch-lit plain,

Compos'd of every thing most light and vain ;

Show without strength, and costly yet unsure :

The walls had scarcely power to sustain

The weighty roof, to make which more secure,

Buttresses far project that could still less endure.

XIII.

Of architecture there was every kind,

Gothic and Grecian, mixture most uncouth ;

The ponderous Moorish, and the style of Ind ;

Part new, part crumbling 'neath time's gnawing tooth ;

Where solid seeming, most unsound in truth.—

Its frail foundation shook when loud within

Resounded headlong revelry of youth.

Now near arriv'd, we heard contesting din

Of music, shouts, and mirth, which should the mastery win.

XIV.

The column'd portico, illumined gay
With glittering lamps of every varied hue,
Spread all around an artificial day,
And carv'd antiquity expos'd to view,
Ting'd with each different light, green, crimson, blue.
The windows stain'd shew'd many a quaint device,
Giving to Fortune all her honours due ;
Which to relate in all their truth and price,
The time from earliest youth to age would scarce suffice.

XV.

And now toward the gate¹³ our way we made,
Where we soon mingled with a struggling crowd,
Surrounded by a rattling cavalcade,
Wind-flaring torches, voices fierce and loud,
Chariots, and gilded cars, and sumpters proud.
This was the entrance nam'd of Confidence,
And none but with self-confidence endow'd
Could enter there. Fain would I haste from thence,
But could not now withstand the current's violence.

XVI.

Vain was resistance; we were swift convey'd
Into a spacious hall, most richly dight,
In tapestry of freshest hues array'd,
And glittering with an aching blaze of light,
Reflected from a thousand mirrors bright.
The arras told the stories of all those
Who had ascended to the loftiest height
Of worldly power—by Fortune's aid who rose,
Ev'n from the basest grade, through circumstance and foes.

XVII.

The Scythian shepherd's tale might there be read,
The mighty Tamerlane, and thousands more:
But chiefly mark'd I one who on his head
The diadems of two fair kingdoms wore;
Two sceptres also in one hand he bore,
And with the other scatter'd honours round,
While Victory long his legions flew before.—
But soon I saw him stretch'd upon the ground,
And he who empires gave, was now a captive bound.

XVIII.

Calm and majestic was he, though undone;
His royal heart could never be subdued:
Still to the last his ardent spirit shone,
And as the setting sun more nobly show'd
Ev'n for the clouds that his decline pursued.
Few friends remain'd, but they preserv'd their faith
In worst extremes with generous fortitude;
They serv'd their master to his latest breath,
Through all his sufferings bitterer far than death¹⁴.

XIX.

And at the upper end of this great hall,
Uprais'd above the crouching throng below,
Sate Fortune, clad in purple and in pall,
Powder'd with pearls, and gems in many a row:
A crown she wore upon her ample brow,
Whose jewels shot such lustre to my eyes,
They scarce endure the many-colour'd glow.
Upon a throne she sate of antique guise,
And on a rolling sphere her foot for ever lies.

XX.

And on the goddess in high place did wait

Flattery, that fawn'd on all who came her near,

And paid most reverence to her idle state :

Smooth was his countenance, and fair his cheer,

And all in front right splendid was his gear,

As brave as lusty courtier well might need ;

But different far behind, where foul appear

The loathsome rags of his unsightly weed,

While he to show it not took ever careful heed.

XXI.

One female figure held me more than all,

Who to her lips uprais'd a trump of brass.

“ Her,” said my guide, “ the vulgar do miscall

“ Life-giving Fame, and too much like, alas!

“ Yet Fame doth her in every point surpass:

“ Mark chiefly when she blows her clarion loud,

“ She points it downward to the thickening mass

“ Of awe-struck slaves below—the baseborn crowd—

“ Not up to highest heaven, to pierce beyond the cloud.

XXII.

“ Not this th’ immortal Fame, for whom that wise
 “ Arch-priest of great Apollo’s temple strove;
 “ ‘ That lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
 “ And perfect witness of all-judging Jove¹⁵.’
 “ Nor such the fame that truly great men prove :
 “ This is ‘ broad rumour’—loud report and base—
 “ Which many more than purest honours love ;
 “ And some now serve within this gorgeous place,
 “ That once high-hearted sought for other, nobler grace !”

XXIII.

This could we see, but could behold no more,
 For through the press we could not make our way :
 Oft we essay’d, but still the crowd before
 Compell’d us most unwilling to delay ;
 And many more with us, in poor array,
 Were made to yield to those in rich attire,
 Whose progress no impediment could stay :
 Them chance could never check, nor labour tire ;
 At Fortune still they aim’d, and gain’d their best desire.

XXIV.

Some work'd by impudence, and some by art;
 Some boldly rush'd, some urg'd by slow degrees;
 Others by accident did forward dart;
 A few almost invited were to seize
 Whatever most their wayward choice would please.
 Many base worshippers there threw aside
 What did them most encumber and disease,
 Burdensome virtues and unwelcome pride;
 By which the great have liv'd, for which the good have died.

XXV.

For us 'twas vain to struggle longer there :
 The royal dame her largesses bestow'd
 With hand profuse; but none to us came near,
 Or coming it was stay'd upon its road,
 Just ere it reach'd. No longer we abode
 In that great hall, but turn'd our steps from thence.
 Before me still my guide the Pilgrim strode,
 Not through the porch of youthful Confidence,
 But through a lowly gate more humble of pretence.

XXVI.

'Twas in the rear of that huge palace bright,
Whose splendours shone more lustrous than the day;
And though in front so gay and richly dight,
Dreary and ruinous behind. No ray
Pierc'd the damp chilly darkness, to display
The path we were to tread. My wary guide,
With staff projecting, prob'd our doubtful way
From fortune-favour'd fools and empty pride—
Behind in dismal vaults their shouts and laughter died.

XXVII.

We issued on what seem'd a dreary waste,
As well as we might deem: though dark the night,
Compar'd with the black passages we past,
Even night's darkness had a greyish light,
Which offer'd not one object to the sight
That could console or cheer us—all around
Was one blank prospect, that might well affright
Me whom fatigue and baffled hopes confound,
While welcome rest was far, save on the bare cold ground.

XXVIII.

I journey'd on full weary and way-sore,
 But he, the rev'rend Pilgrim, seem'd to feel
 No weariness, but kept his pace before,
 And I still follow'd closely at his heel :
 Yet oft would I with feeble voice appeal
 To him to stay his speed, but all in vain ;
 The whistling night-wind in careering wheel
 Full in my face bore back the sound again ;
 And now began to fall the heavy pattering rain.

XXIX.

The skies grew darker as we travell'd on,
 In blacker robes did night herself enfold :
 I look'd around for shelter, but was none
 That might protect us from the wet and cold.
 Back whence we came my longing eyes I roll'd
 Towards that palace bright—that royal place—
 Nought but a wall of darkness I behold
 Against my eyes ; nor was there left one trace,
 But night and wind and rain its glories all deface.

XXX.

Still fell the rain, and still the Pilgrim sped ;
 Footing nor cold nor wet he seem'd to mind,
While I o'er quagmires and deep dykes was led,
 Struggling and plunging, sometimes far behind :
 He kept his way, nor his smooth pace declin'd,
Though oft I fell, and call'd to him for aid ;
 Nothing he heard but the deep roaring wind :
Sometimes I lost him in the dismal shade,
And then for life itself I almost felt afraid.

XXXI.

At last I fell exhausted, void of strength
 My endless-seeming journey to pursue ;
Upon the splashy ground I lay at length :—
 I heard the Pilgrim's parting steps, and knew
 I had not power to follow. The wind blew
Even with greater fierceness than before,
 Rushing in fury by ; in torrents too
The skies descend, yet was I so way-sore,
That being left behind I scarcely could deplore.

XXXII.

Extended thus some little space I laid,
 Blessing the rain-drench'd earth that gave me rest,
 When suddenly methought the blast convey'd
 To my dull'd sense the voice of one distress:
 Some traveller lost like me perhaps, at best;
 Or one hard struggling 'gainst the deadly knife
 Of dark banditti who the waste infest;
 In the dread pauses of the mortal strife
 Crying aloud for aid, yet hopeless of his life.

XXXIII.

Half rais'd, I listen'd, and mine ear did strain;
 But ev'n the sweeping wind was hush'd and still.
 At that dread moment nature paus'd:—the rain,
 Fast pelting down, as by its own mere will
 Ceas'd to descend; yet darkness blank did fill
 The vault of heaven. Dead silence reign'd around,
 Save waters, that in many a trickling rill
 Cours'd lowly rattling o'er the channel'd ground.—
 I listen'd still intent, but heard none other sound.

XXXIV.

“ Ah! luckless traveller!” I inly cried,
“ Hast thou then fallen ’neath the assassin’s steel?
“ Thy life was haply precious ; had I died,
“ I might have welcom’d death, since now I feel
“ To death alone for aid I can appeal!”

Scarce had I ended, when my eager ear
Was struck by sound as of the rapid heel
Of one swift running, from some horrid fear¹⁶ ;
By quick degrees it sounds more plainly and more near.

XXXV.

And now the sailing moon, unseen before,
Hidden behind some black and o’ercharg’d cloud,
Shone brightly forth: her brightness seem’d the more
From the deep darkness that whilere did shrowd
The barren waste. With burnish’d keel she plough’d
The rolling billowy sky, and cut her way
Right onward; like some gilded vessel proud,
Whose destin’d voyage no obstructions stay,
But splits the mountain waves, and scatters wide the spray.

XXXVI.

And by her blessed lustre I beheld

A man, approaching at his utmost speed,
 As though by dread of threaten'd death compell'd :
 What might his face express I could not read,
 His head was turn'd to whence his fears proceed ;
 Yet as he ran, and by the fresh moonlight
 I could discern the richness of his weed ;
 Though weather-worn, of cloth of gold most bright,
 And silks and trappings gay, fit for an amorous knight.

XXXVII.

And now he had arriv'd near to the spot

Where I remain'd. From the wet splashy ground
 I had uprisen, anxious for the lot
 Of him whose flying footsteps I heard sound,
 And who, I fear'd, had suffer'd from the wound
 Of fierce banditti :—if from loss of blood,
 Fatigue, or footing on the earth unsound,
 I knew not ; but he fell just where I stood,
 Calling on him to save who died upon the rood.

XXXVIII.

I sprang to raise him as he lay at length;
For now a human creature needed aid,
Sudden I felt return my wonted strength.
He struggled fiercely with me, as afraid
That I was one of those that had waylaid
Him on his road. "Unhand me, wretch!" he cried:
"Had I but arms thou shouldst be well repaid!
"But cowardice to murder is allied:—
"Help, help, oh gracious Heaven! for there is none beside!"

XXXIX.

"Fear not," I said, "fear not a timely friend;
"Thy deadly enemies are distant now:
"Look up, fair sir, and let thy terrors end!"
With that he lifted up his downcast brow,
And seeing me, breath'd out a silent vow
To pitying Heaven. By that pale light I see
A goodly youth, whom scarce I could allow
The name of man: most fair he seem'd to be,
And with his gay attire his youthful looks agree.

XL.

“ Ah ! gentle sir,” he cried, “ whoe’er thou art,
 “ Danger awaits us here, fly quickly hence ;
 “ Oh ! let us from this fatal heath depart,
 “ Where force is useless, and in vain defence !”
 And then anew his flight he did commence,
 Drawing me after ; nor could I resist,
 Nor ask from what our danger rose, and whence.
 My new-rai’d fears my want of strength assist,
 And whither we were bound I neither cared nor wist.

XLI.

We travell’d on till morning ’gan to ope
 Upon the dusky world her large grey eye ;
 Yet still could I discern nor aid, nor hope
 Of welcome rest, or other comfort nigh.
 Methought perchance the Pilgrim I might ’spy,
 And as I pierc’d the dimness of the morn,
 Fancied I saw him, while with the dun sky
 His grey apparel mingled ; but forlorn,
 Whether ’twere true or false, he from my sight was borne.

XLII.

My bright companion of the way the while,
 (Bright was his raiment—bright as might be seen
In princes' courts to catch sweet beauty's smile,
 Although 'twere now disfigur'd much, I ween,
 By rain and splashy ways where he had been,)
Hasten'd along, as unknown dangers lay
 Behind us still. With pale and haggard mien
He cast his eyes around, but most that way
From whence he fled so fast his threaten'd life's decay.

XLIII.

No sun arose our toilsome road to cheer,
 But all the heavens a misty darkness wore,
According with the waste so wide and drear
 Which with augmenting pain we journey'd o'er.
The stranger seem'd to suffer even more
Than I sustain'd: a court had been his place,
 Though thence exil'd by some misfortune sore;
His person was most gracious, and his face,
Though trench'd with early woe, bore many a noble trace.

XLIV.

And as I pac'd along, some thoughts invade
In contrast sad of present and of past;
The change which but a few brief hours had made
Since I, upon the hill's side careless cast,
Heard the bright brooklet as it murmur'd past,
And mark'd the prospect glorious and wide:
How thought I then my tranquil bliss would last,
Full little deeming what would soon betide,
Thrown on a desert bare, without rest, hope, or guide!

XLV.

Yet even sadder gloomier fancies seem
To fill the mind of the lorn stranger wight;
As if revolving on some hideous dream,
That all his waking senses did affright:
Sorrow had banish'd every lov'd delight,
That once cast sunshine on his spring of youth,
Which now had suffer'd such a woful blight.
Full oft he beat his breast in bitter ruth,
And mutter'd curses deep on woman's vile untruth.

XLVI.

And now a rising mountain was in view,
Cover'd with dampish fogs all murky black,
On which no trees, nor shrubs, nor verdure grew,
To clothe the bareness of its sinuous back;
And up the side there seem'd a winding track
Towards the top—the top we could not see;
It was envelop'd in the skies' dark rack:
Yet even this path afforded hope, that we
Beyond the hill might find some end of misery.

XLVII.

Urg'd by this dreary hope we slowly drew
T'ward the hill's base; and now our feet essay
The upward path we could but dimly view:
But toilsome, painful, endless seem'd the way;
The mountain's side was nought but slimy clay,
That treacherous fail'd our footing as we went.
'Gainst each projecting point our steps we stay,
And still towards the top our sight we bent,
Whence thought of prospect fair new strength and courage lent.

XLVIII.

My sad companion kept not equal pace,
 For now and then, as if his force declin'd,
 He would hang back; and now, as in a race,
 He madly struggled on, and left behind
 Me, lost in wonder at his desperate mind;
 Until again exhausted he would rest,
 Panting for breath, and seem'd methought to bind
 Something most closely to his heaving breast,
 While agony and grief his tortur'd face exprest.

XLIX.

At last we gain'd the summit of the hill,
 And found the mists less dense as we ascended.
 To breathe at ease we stood some moments still,
 Nor to the past nor present view attended:
 At length we mark'd behind us, wide extended,
 The vale of Disappointment and Despair,
 Wide, drear, and cold, o'er which thick mists depended.
 Before us was a sight uncouth and rare,
 A vale on all sides bound by rocks, bleak, rugged, bare.

L.

No vegetation on those rocks was seen,
Which so inclos'd the valley, that the sun
Could never cast his blessed beams between,
To change the noisome vapours dank and dun;
And sign of living creature there was none.
A few black pines their mouldering trunks uprear,
To shew the triumphs antique time had won;
And here and there lichens and moss appear,
To make this fearful vale more melancholy drear.

LI.

No mortal sound the dismal silence broke,
But all the hollow seem'd as still as death:
The wolf's hoarse bark, or raven's tuneless croak,
Would there have sounded cheerful. Not a breath
Of passing wind moan'd through the vale beneath,
As if the breath of life itself were dead.
Not one short word one to the other saith;
Gazing we stand, as if the silence dread
Had power to freeze our tongues—save sight, all senses fled.

LII.

But my companion stood not gazing long.
 As by some sudden energy impell'd,
 He darted forward, still in spirit strong;
 Perhaps some welcome object he beheld:
 I could not call to stay him, but compell'd
 By secret impulse, his swift steps pursued,
 Though to descend my coward heart rebell'd:
 Yet stronger shame my weaker fear subdued,
 And now to overtake my former strength renew'd.

LIII.

That amphitheatre of high-pil'd rocks
 We to descend attempt, to gain the vale:
 Mass above mass were laid the ponderous blocks,
 And all our efforts seem at first to fail,
 Threaten'd at every step with death or bale.
 Of crag and precipice a fearful sight
 Presented was, that stoutest hearts might quail:
 To jutting points I often clung, till quite
 Exhausted, down I fell an unseen desperate height.

LIV.

Yet still we liv'd by some preserving chance:
 Could no obstruction the wild youth amate;
Dauntless, at every risk, would he advance,
 Though the sharp rocks tore his fair limbs, which late
 Seem'd to have known so far, far gentler state.
I cautious follow'd—all return forbidden—
 On some projecting crag oft held debate
Whether to leap and dare the danger hidden,
While the deep chasm appear'd at every look to widen.

LV.

And now the bottom of the dismal vale
 Look'd nearer than the top whence we had come;
Though to behold the height still turn'd me pale.
 Nought heeded he of danger, but fast clomb
 From crag to crag, as heedless of his doom.—
Trembling I watch'd him in his rash career
 To a deep rift that might have been the tomb
Of some huge Titan: he, approaching near,
Essay'd its width to leap, reckless and void of fear.

LVI.

He leapt and fell!—he fell—oh, horrid sight!—

Down, down, far down. : On a jagg'd rock that hung
Across the chasm was stay'd his figure light ;

All powerless, as lifeless, there it swung,

Without a groan those echoing caves among.

Aid he could not demand, nor I bestow :

Fearful I gaz'd, while to the rock I clung
With double force, and my eyes dizzy grow
With looking on that dismal spectacle below.

LVII.

And here had I remain'd until my strength

Was quite evaporate, and like a stone

I fell down that same rift ; but that at length

Some signs I knew life had not wholly flown

From his fair form—motion and feeble groan :

These gave new fear, lest in attempt to rise,

O'erbalanc'd, he should fall still deeper down,

And thus end hope at once: this thought supplies

New power, that wonted dread and obstacle defies.

LVIII.

I know not how I reach'd him, but I know
He had awaken'd as from deadly trance;
The cold sweat hung upon his colder brow,
And the blood trickled down the fair expanse
Of his broad livid forehead. I advance
My hand to him, who look'd as though unaware
Of present help, or of his dire mischance:
He took it with a wild unconscious glare,
And from that dreadful spot the tottering youth I bare.

END OF THE SECOND CANTO.

CANTO III.

A new but sad companion found

Upon his lonely road,

IGNOTO seeks a blasted vale

And cold NEGLECT'S abode.

I.

THE place whereon we rested was the edge
 Of a high precipice of granite stone,
 Whose deep side offer'd us nor point nor ledge,
 By which we might descend : a jagged cone,
 Split at the top, uprear'd its mass alone
 Behind us, and impended overhead.

The way I came remain'd. Upright, half prone,
 The slabs immense afford a dangerous tread,
 Yet over these at length the suffering youth I led.

II.

Full oft he miss'd his footing, and as oft
Grew giddy at the height at which we stood
Over the heavy vale; but still aloft
Secure I bore him. In wild reckless mood,
Careless of life, his progress he pursued:
Though weak, exhausted, trembling, panting, pale,
He seem'd with some internal strength endued
When his corporeal powers sink and fail,
That still impell'd him on to ruin and to bale.

III.

Nor ever friendly look nor thankful word
He gave to me, his not much firmer guide,
But still urg'd on by danger undeterr'd,
And scarcely knowing I was at his side.
And now we had approach'd an opening wide,
That look'd as if it led upon the plain
By swift descent: th'intrepid youth defied
The perilous height, and downward plung'd amain,
Nor with my utmost strength could I his course restrain.

IV.

With pulsing heart I follow'd. As I thought
The fissure ended on the plain below,
The bottom of the valley I had sought
By wearying progress, hazardous and slow;
And at its mouth, worn down by toil and woe,
I found the youth, who sank upon a rock
That once on the adjoining crags did grow,
Till torn from thence by heaving nature's shock,
It stood a thunder-riven and thunder-rooted block.

V.

There left I him awhile to gaze around
On all that was presented to my sight.
The atmosphere was dank and chill, the ground
Buried 'neath tangled grass of rankest height:
Yet on the grass was seen no verdure bright,
Nor flowers nor herbs in varied sweetness grew,
But all seem'd blasted by a deadly blight;
And upon all there hung a baleful dew,
Dried not by the sun's beams, nor any wind that blew.

VI.

Some leafless trees were scatter'd here and there
Upon the waste, among the masses rude
That from the precipice were rent whilere,
And on the centre of the vale intrude.
Few leaves upon their barren arms I view'd,
And those were dry and pale, and look'd to heaven
On topmost twigs, as for its breath they sued.
Some trunks were broken short, some rent and riven
By headlong rocks resistless o'er the wide plain driven.

VII.

It was a dreary prospect, and save one
I saw no object that could cheer my eyes—
No living creature, rest or shelter none!—
Around the vale in pinnacles arise
The whiten'd rocks, and point into the skies:
The sun was setting, and his lustre bright
Upon each rocky minaret now lies,
Crowning the brow with coronet of light,
While all the space below seem'd wrapt in deeper night.

VIII.

This sight it was that cheer'd me, though it told

That we must pass another dismal night,

Restless save on the grass so dank and cold,

Or on the barren rock in harder plight.

Thus pond'ring, I return'd to the sad wight

Whom I had left in such distressful state,

Recovering breath and strength if so he might.

I found him not where he but now had sate,

But far he had not roam'd, of spirit more elate.

IX.

I soon rejoin'd him, and from thence we stray'd,

Skirting the walls that the deep plain surround,

In hopes some lonely cavern's gloomy shade,

To shelter us from night, might there be found :

With poisonous noxious reptiles they abound,

Adders and vipers hiss among the grass,

As we disturb'd their ancient reign profound ;

For ne'er methought did human footstep pass

Over that noisome vale, and thread each ponderous mass.

X.

The sluggish evening damps rose thick and chill
As we pursued our way through rocky brake,
Now under shade of some impending hill,
And now across a plain like sedgy lake,
Where lengthen'd reeds our progress tedious make:
When sudden as the rocks again we near,
A lowly murmuring seem'd to overtake
Our sleepy senses, half benumb'd by fear;
For mournful sound like that we little thought to hear.

XI.

It could not be the wind, for not a breath
Wav'd the long grass that rustled 'neath our feet,
And all, till then, was hush as Nature's death,
And this blank spot her grave and her retreat:
Beasts had we mark'd none, whether slow or fleet,
And birds of boding voice could never sound
So sadly as the notes that now did meet
Our pulsing ears: it seem'd as though the ground,
The cold and dreary earth its fittest voice had found;

XII.

As though the scowling rocks to distance scatter'd,
 The caverns deep, that day's sweet light exclude,
 The ragged trees with leafless arms and shatter'd,
 Had their own voice in that wild solitude,
 Well fitting with a scene so sad and rude.
 Again we heard it—more distinctly now;
 And now methought the voice appear'd endued
 With sounds articulate of speech, though low,
 And from behind a crag made heavy way and slow.

XIII.

With cautious step, and hearts that palpitate,
 We near'd the spot whence the low sounds proceed,
 Hoping to hear them more articulate :
 It was not like the voice of one in need,
 Nor of a wight whose heart did inly bleed—
 A hoarse, unearthly, melancholy tone,
 As holy saint at earnest prayer and creed;
 And now conceal'd behind a favouring stone,
 We heard some fervent soul thus utter forth his moan :

XIV.

“ Hail, welcome solitude, where year by year
“ I lead the tranquil tenor of my days !
“ Hail, circling rocks, and all this prospect drear,
“ Far, far from human ken and beaten ways !
“ Now once again the glaring noontide rays
“ Have past away, and all-involving night
“ Is fast expelling evening's sunset blaze.
“ Here let me sit and watch with patient sight
“ The happy stars that move in loneliness and light.

XV.

“ Ah ! joyous ye that roll above this earth,
“ And view man's labours with a calm regard;
“ And know his noblest efforts nothing worth,
“ Toil without fruit, and care without reward !
“ I know them so, and worse, and therefore barr'd
“ Myself ev'n here against th' access of man :
“ I know the ungrateful world, nor think it hard
“ Thus to confine my life within the span
“ Of this dim vale remote. Here my true joys began !

XVI.

- “ The wisest men contemn’d the court, the herd
 “ Of linked slaves, howe’er bedight and brave ;
 “ And those whom Fortune has the most preferr’d
 “ Must fill at last a solitary grave,
 “ The scorn and jest of every fool and knave.
 “ We enter singly on this mortal state—
 “ We quit it singly—welcome then, my cave !
 “ That I most love which others chiefly hate ;
 “ The more the world is fill’d, the more ’tis desolate.

XVII.

- “ The noblest of God’s creatures, brute and prone,
 “ Teach all mankind the same example still :
 “ The lordly lion stalks the plain alone,
 “ Alone at night his shaggy lair doth fill :
 “ The mighty eagle mounts from yonder hill,
 “ And trusts in single flight his powerful wing¹⁷ ;
 “ Sails upward to the sun, and drinks at will
 “ From that great orb, of light and life the spring :
 “ They hold no converse low with any living thing.

XVIII.

" All hail then, solitude—blest solitude!
 " Of deepest thought at once both sire and child!
 " Hail, rocks on which dwells ever winter rude,
 " To me most grateful where most bleak and wild!
 " Hail, damps which summer's heat has ne'er exil'd!
 " And you each leafless tree of sad aspect,
 " Thrust out 'mong these huge cliffs so antic pil'd—
 " Hail to ye all! Your joys let all reject,
 " Here is the welcome dwelling-place of cold Neglect."

XIX.

The voice now ceas'd; yet still the rocks and caves
 Retain'd the echoes of that mystic sound:
 As the hoarse murmurs of the ocean waves
 Heard far, far off against the cliffs rebound,
 When raging to o'erleap that natural mound,
 They still are back repell'd. So deeply wrought
 That voice in us, it fix'd us to the ground:
 Then gazed we on each other, as we sought
 To learn, yet dar'd not speak, each other's inward thought.

XX.

The voice though awful, yet not fearful seem'd :

Thus woe-begone and lost, what could we dread ?

Much rather hope upon our senses beam'd,

When our first mute astonishment was fled.

Repose we sought, and though from what was said,

We judg'd the speaker some lone misanthrope,

Buried in this deep valley, living-dead,

Yet seeing us, he could not chuse but ope

His gloomy dreary cell, and realize our hope.

XXI.

As by one thought impell'd, one impulse led,

Round the bare rocks we wound that intercept

Our searching sight : full silently we tread,

And now, as we imagin'd, we had crept

Where his lone seat the hoary hermit kept :

Yet nought could see, save rugged rocks and grey,

In antic shapes, that in the twilight slept ;

And oft we watch'd them, moveless as they lay,

Deeming them human forms—nor night it was, nor day.

XXII.

Were we deceiv'd? The hollow voice and word
 Still sounded in our ears, yet nothing near
 From whence it could proceed we mark'd or heard :
 All round about was deathly still and drear.
 More superhuman now those sounds appear;
 Perhaps the spirit of that lifeless waste,
 Not the sad plaint of holy hermit seer,
 Driv'n from the world by hatred and distaste
 For worldly pleasures vain and luxuries unchaste.

XXIII.

" Whoe'er thou art that habitst here," I cried,
 In voice subdued, " or human or divine,
 " Oh! deign in charity our steps to guide,
 " And to our prayers a favouring ear incline.
 " Far have we journey'd, nor would we repine
 " At our hard lot could we repose obtain :
 " Since sun of yesterday began to shine
 " We have not rested from our toil and pain,
 " And now at length have reach'd this rock-encompass'd plain."

XXIV.

While thus I spoke, I trembled at the sound
 Of my own voice in that lone savage place,
 While my companion eager sought around
 If answer kind or rude my prayers might grace;
 Then mute he turn'd, and gaz'd upon my face,
 As well as he could see by that dim light;
 And thus had we remain'd some moments' space
 When, lo! again that voice of man or sprite
 We heard, but whence it came defied our poring sight.

XXV.

" And who are ye, that thus with daring foot
 " Upon my welcome solitude now break?
 " Am I not free e'en here from man's pursuit,
 " Though places inaccessible I seek?
 " Whence come ye, worldlings, and what would ye? Speak!
 " Here have I nought to tempt ye from your road,
 " Save ragged caves, hard fare, and mountains bleak,
 " That long have been Neglect's secure abode,
 " 'Mid ways that human foot before hath seldom trode."

XXVI.

The tone was somewhat alter'd, more severe
And stern, as if in wrath the spirit spoke—
The spirit of that solitude so drear,
Upon whose loneliness we rudely broke,
And the dread silence of that vale awoke.
Viewless to us he seem'd, yet still his words
Sounded like those of one who had forsake
The heartless, thankless ways of human herds,
And sought this lonely spot, free e'en from beasts and birds.

XXVII.

“ If ever pity dwelt within thy breast,”
I thus return'd in soothing humble tone,
“ Oh! grant this night to give the weary rest,
“ Who from their ignorance offend alone.
“ With no rude purpose we break in upon,
“ Whate'er thou art, thy hallow'd loneliness;
“ But all our hope, except from thee, is gone;
“ To thee do we appeal in our distress,
“ Hermit, or spirit dread of this bleak wilderness!”

XXVIII.

“ Whence com'st thou, youth? and whither wouldst thou go?”

The voice less stern and hoarse replied in haste;
 And I, encourag'd by its mildness, show
 How with the rev'rend Pilgrim I had trac'd
 The mazy wood, till Fortune's palace, plac'd
 Upon the flambeau-lighted plain, we enter'd;
 How my guide fled on Disappointment's waste,
 And I with new and bold companion ventur'd
 Into this vale obscure, where all our hopes were centred.

XXIX.

“ And who art thou, companion of his toil?”

“ And why dost thou the ways of men reject?”

“ Why hast thou fled the peopl'd world's turmoil,

“ To visit here the haunt of cold Neglect?”

He said, and stay'd, as though he did expect
 An answer; nor did long await reply.

“ Ah! view in me,” he cried, “ the fond effect

“ Of slighted love and woman's perfidy,

“ Of truth repaid with falsehood, love with cruelty!

XXX.

“ Whether the genius of this desert spot,
“ Or hermit sage, the which I rather deem,
“ Thou canst not chuse but pity my hard lot,
“ Although thy heart cold as these rocks should seem.
“ In Pleasure’s court I liv’d as in a dream,
“ And there I roll’d in endless rapture free,
“ Nor thought of aught save bliss and beauty’s beam,
“ Which from the brightest eyes fair shone on me;
“ And while I bask’d methought no end of joy could be.

XXXI.

“ But as a voyager on the treacherous seas
“ In some huge vessel with her tackling proud,
“ Is oft in danger most when most at ease,
“ Dreading no coming tempest fierce and loud;
“ Anon the clear’s obscur’d by many a cloud,
“ The ocean rises as the hoarse winds rave;
“ The waves that late disdainfully she plough’d
“ Now rend her hull; the vessel late so brave
“ Is made the sport of winds, the plaything of the wave:

XXXII.

- “ So I, when most I deem’d myself secure,
 “ And in my mistress most had confidence,
 “ Ev’n then in hapless state was most unsure,
 “ And all my joy was but a vain pretence.
 “ Her beauty’s charm dissolv’d my every sense,
 “ And in a bath of bliss my soul did float¹⁸ :
 “ I never dreamt deceit could come from thence
 “ Where heavenly beauty reign’d—but far remote—
 “ Her lovely features shone like falsehood’s antidote.

XXXIII.

- “ To such a face who would not freely trust,
 “ And on such beauty all his fortunes rest?
 “ Who would not hold that Heav’n could be unjust,
 “ Or the sun cease his progress toward the west,
 “ Ere she could harbour falsehood in her breast?
 “ Yet so I found it!—She, to me untrue,
 “ To a vile baseborn slave her love addrest!
 “ Oh! cursed hour when I her falsehood knew,
 “ And with this wretched hand her new-found lover slew!

XXXIV.

“ Revenge had work’d my soul into a foam,
“ Yet could I not her spotless beauty mar;
“ And when I thrust my greedy weapon home
“ Into his heart, her breast I could not scar,
“ Though than her paramour more guilty far.
“ I lov’d her still, ev’n in excess of hate,
“ And love and hate within my bosom war.
“ I tore me from her wild and desperate,
“ And in another realm sought out another fate.

XXXV.

“ Where’er I turn’d to fly that bloody scene,
“ I still was hunted down by fell Despair:
“ In many a land have I a wanderer been,
“ And ever found his emissaries there.
“ Ev’n now within this feverish breast I bear
“ A rankling wound that aye doth inly bleed,
“ Which they inflicted on me all unware,
“ While o’er that blasted desert I proceed,
“ Where I this youth encounter’d at my utmost need.

XXXVI.

“ Deem me not then a wretch past pity’s aid,
“ A harden’d murderer repentance past!
“ The fatal truth I have wide open laid,
“ And now myself on Heaven’s mercy cast.
“ That a vile slave should all my prospects blast
“ Rous’d my worst fury! If some noble knight
“ Had gain’d my faithless mistress’ love at last,
“ Methinks I could have borne the cruel slight.—
“ Oh, grov’ling-hearted maid!—oh, love most lewd and light!”

XXXVII.

Thus ended he his tale of foul deceit,
And as he ended, on the bare cold ground
He fell insensible, ev’n at my feet:
I gently strove to raise him, but I found
In his cold breast that ever rankling wound
Of which he spake, that freshly, freely bled.
To staunch the stream the hurt I quickly bound,
And raising on my knee his drooping head,
I loudly call’d for aid, as fearing he was dead.

XXXVIII.

No answer heard I, save from rock or cave
That my own voice around reverberate.
But now some signs of life's return he gave;
His heart once more began to palpitate,
Which seem'd his welling wound to aggravate:
Close to his breast I would have kept my hand,
But he, as if in passion desperate,
Sprang on his feet, and thus essay'd to stand,
But staggering almost fell again upon the strand.

XXXIX.

Yet fain would he impetuously have rush'd
He knew not whither in his anguish wild,
But I restrain'd him and his fury hush'd,
And him recomforted in accents mild,
Until he yielded like a wayward child.
He rested faintly on a neighbouring stone,
Holding his hands, in his own blood defil'd,
Before his eyes, with many an inward moan,
And many a broken sentence that his guilt did own.

XL.

While thus I stood, methought a rustling noise
I heard among the grass and fragments bare;
And now again I felt that solemn voice
Heavily rolling o'er the dusky air:
"Come, follow me!" it cried. With eager stare
I look'd around, and with a fearful start
Fancied I saw a figure, gaunt and spare,
In slow and solemn measure move athwart
Those rocks of which he seem'd by that dim light a part.

XLI.

Whence it had risen could I not declare;
It mov'd right onward like a dusky cloud,
Nor wound among the rocks spread here and there:
And now the darkness did it wholly shroud,
Or it had vanish'd; but in voice more loud
To where it mov'd it soon recall'd my eyes:
"Come, follow me!"—Unconsciously I bow'd,
And aiding my companion weak to rise,
We anxiously pursue where the slow shadow flies.

XLII.

Long time we had not journey'd ere we reach
The rocks, a rugged wall, the vale that gird,
And in those rocks we now behold a breach,
Some dreary cavern's mouth. Awhile deterr'd
Gazing we stood, until again we heard
The awful voice resounding as on high:
"Enter, and fear not; enter!" On the word
More boldly we advanc'd, but could espy
No light to guide our steps or cheer the poring eye.

XLIII.

All, all was dark within. Again we stay
Our steps, not knowing whither we were led;
But the bold youth soon forc'd himself away,
And darted forward, void of every dread:
"The worst is but the worst!" he wildly said;
"Worse than I have sustain'd can ne'er ensue!"
I follow'd him, until a taper red,
Or glimmering lamp, far in the cave we view,
And toward this welcome light we haste with courage new.

XLIV.

Narrow the passage was through which we past,
 Until we near'd this solitary light,
 The which a faint uncertain radiance cast
 Upon a chamber wide, and of such height
 We could not reach the ceiling with our sight:
 Dry leaves were strew'd in a retiring nook,
 The bed no doubt of some world-wearied wight,
 Who in disgust the paths of man forsook,
 And on a tablet low was laid full many a book.

XLV.

"Here rest ye," said the voice, "till morning break,"
 In accents ev'n more hollow than before;
 As if the caverns yawning jaws then spake,
 Nor by whom utter'd could our eyes explore.
 "Welcome are ye to all my cave and store;
 "Nor will ye fare, though frugal, now reject,
 "Nor the hard couch upon the leafy floor.—
 "No thanks—no base return do I expect;
 "For ye fit tenants are for cave of cold Neglect."

XLVI.

We heard no more: in the deep cave's recess
The hollow awful accents quite expir'd,
And toward the close the sound grew less and less,
As if by slow degrees the voice retir'd.—
I cast my eyes around me and admir'd
That antique cave, and sage inscriptions read;
While my companion, with his travel tir'd,
And weak with loss of blood, sank on the bed,
That leafy couch, and lay as motionless as dead.

XLVII.

Around the granite walls I saw engraven
Full many a scroll in ancient character,
Of vanity of all things under heaven,
And human foolishness that could prefer
To mix in the world's business and stir,
Hoping to raise or benefit mankind;
While base ingratitude did aye defer
All hoped return, and many a noble mind,
By madness overthrown, in disappointment pin'd.

XLVIII.

Here rare inventions of mechanic skill
Were register'd as uselessly invented,
To perfect which, enduring every ill,
The ruin'd author died, yet ne'er repented.
And here were high achievements deep indented,
Which mighty nations happy made and free,
But th' achiever, with the deed contented,
Died unrewarded: here again I see
The vanity of wit and wisdom's misery!

XLIX.

And on the tablet of the solid stone
Old books in different languages were laid,
While others were in niches thickly strown,
And others hidden in recesses' shade.
In reading these rare works I long delay'd:
They were the fruits of learning long entomb'd,
Or by divine imagination made:
Yet vainly was the midnight lamp consum'd,
And in the desert air the poet's blossoms bloom'd.

L.

Science alike and sage philosophy
 Were thrust into Neglect's unknown abode;
 The noblest products of man's industry
 The various parts of this huge cavern ow'd,
 For my remembrance too severe a load.
 Some works I saw that many an after-age
 Shall deem the highest blessing God bestow'd,
 And reverence the life-neglected sage,
 Whose very name is raz'd from history's partial page¹⁹.

LI.

How different far, methought, has been their fate
 The deadliest enemies our race has known,
 Pursued with blindest worship early, late;
 And some, admir'd for efforts not their own,
 Have to the world's eye stood aloft, alone.
 How oft has persecution hunted him
 Upon whose toils the light of science shone,
 To clear the errors of man's darkness dim,
 Compell'd to drain the cup of sorrow from the brim!

LII.

But most in corners thrown without regard,
 Begrim'd with dust I saw the poet's lays;
 The nobly gifted heaven-inspired bard
 Had not the poor reward of empty praise.
 Here strains I read that in more favour'd days
 Would have uprais'd the author to the skies,
 But now in cold Neglect's lone cave he stays,
 Companion with the learned, great, and wise :
 Well could his lofty soul the world's contempt despise !

LIII.

" And be it ever so !" I fervent cried—
 " No poet he who courts the world's applause :
 " The truly gifted feel a nobler pride,
 " And hate the tainted breath of vulgar maws,
 " Condemning idly, praising without cause.
 " To be a poet is enough reward !
 " He rules his actions by his own just laws,
 " He makes his own delights, nor is debarr'd
 " From all that can deserve so high a mind's regard !"

LIV.

All this I saw ; and now fatigue bereaves
My weary eyes of power to look on more.
I laid me down upon the bed of leaves
Thickly disspread upon the rocky floor,
Where the sad grief-worn youth was stretch'd before.
All tranquilly he slept with breathings light,
Yet still his hand upon his wound he wore;
And then so pale his cheek, I ween, one might
But for his breath have thought endless to him that night.

END OF THE THIRD CANTO.

CANTO IV.

From cold NEGLECT IGNOTO hies ;

The PILGRIM meets again ;

And finds the MUSE to be his guide

Through POVERTY's domain.

I.

HOW long I might have lain in thoughtless sleep,

Without a dream to trouble my repose,

I know not, if that voice, unearthly deep,

Had not requir'd my eyes I should unclose :

Startled I woke, and on my couch half rose,

Wondering at every object strange that met

My eyes bewilder'd. Whether friends or foes

Had brought me there, and wherefore, I forget,

And in my ears confus'd the voice was sounding yet.

N

II.

Wildly I gaz'd around, until I saw,
Ev'n at the side of my low leafy bed,
That form mysterious, which with solemn awe
Our way to this same gloomy cavern led.
" Arise, fair youth, for it is morn," he said,
" And follow me to drink the morning air :
" Nay, leave your young companion—he is dead !"
Alas ! it was so—life nor heat was there :
" And here," the Hermit cried, " behold the end of care !"

III.

I turn'd towards him with a mournful eye,
But still less mournful far when I beheld
How tranquilly at ease the youth did lie :
It seem'd as though no violence expell'd
His willing life, but tranquilly it well'd.
His face lay upward, quiet as in sleep,
With every trace of former woe dispell'd :
It was a sight to smile on, not to weep,
And on the dead man's face a constant smile did keep.

IV.

As we have seen on a clear summer's day,
 When undisturb'd the sky-reflecting sea,
 Some beauteous ship at anchor in a bay,
 With tackling furl'd, and motionless, as she
 Were never meant from that bright spot to flee:
 Or as a summer cloud, when not a breath
 Wafts it through heaven's vault, such as we see
 Melt into the blue nothing :—such his death,
 So peacefully he lay on the dry leaves beneath.

V.

“ Living like him who willingly would live?
 “ Dying like him who would not freely die?
 “ Behold the aid that pitying Heav'n could give,
 “ And here the only end of misery !
 “ Ah ! happy end and joyous destiny !
 “ Now triumphs he above his earthly foe,
 “ O'er base ingratitude and perfidy,
 “ Which human blood in tides has caus'd to flow,
 “ And made the peopled world a wilderness of woe !”

VI.

Thus spake the Hermit—from the cavern dark
Then led me forth into the open day.
For the first time I now distinctly mark
His venerable figure, which made stay
At the wide entrance to point out the way
I must pursue, if so I would reject
His most persuasive counsel to delay
With him in this lone sojourn of Neglect;
For from cold-hearted man what could I e'er expect?

VII.

Wan was his cheek, deep sunken was his eye
Beneath his gray and overhanging brow:
Though time had wrong'd his features' symmetry,
Yet could it not his manly shoulders bow.
Wide o'er his breast his ancient beard did flow:
Unbent he stood, like antiquated tower,
Majestic in its ruins; and more now
Than when assaulted by a kingdom's flower,
It frown'd defiance high on all their futile power.

VIII.

The sun was risen, and his vigorous light
Shot overhead from each bright pinnacle
Of rocks that skirt the vale; but dusky night
Still heavy linger'd in this dreary dell.
The vapours dun on every object fell,
Dank, drizzling, cold—a black unwholesome dew!
Death was behind me in the dismal cell,
And living death beside me, while the view
Of the fresh light invites my journey to pursue.

IX.

He said no more, but pointing to the road
Toward the eastern side of that wild vale,
Retir'd again into his drear abode,
Nor waited for my thanks. My spirits fail
To think that I had now alone to scale
That perilous wall of rocks that high impended,
Still struggling up, haply without avail,
By no companion cheer'd, no hope befriended,
Till with Neglect at last my unknown days I ended.

X.

But as I look'd again, methought I saw
A separation in the rocky pile,
More clear and obvious as I nearer draw :
It seem'd to lead by many a turning wile
Up to the higher plains : a brightening smile
I felt come o'er my face; fresh-springing hope
Made my heart leap within my breast the while;
And now I fancied that an easy slope
Would soon upon the broad and cultured champain ope.

XI.

Nor hope deceiv'd me. Down this fissure wide
The sunshine on the neighbouring valley pour'd
A glorious and invigorating tide,
That every dark and deep recess explor'd.
I prais'd the heav'nly powers that thus afford
A welcome prospect I could least expect :
My limbs with new and active vigour stor'd,
All dark desponding fears I soon reject,
And thus I left behind the vale of cold Neglect.

XII.

It was a joyous heart-expanding sight,
After that valley's chilly dreariness,
To mark the fair effects of gladsome light :
The hue of sickly brown grew less and less ;
And in the midst of rocky barrenness
The lengthy grass put on a cheerful green ;
And further upward, from the crevices
Fresh opening flowers drinking the beams were seen,
While wanton woodbine twin'd its wreathing arms between.

XIII.

Yet the ascent was difficult and steep,
And where the bending road was fair and wide
I was compell'd at times on hands to creep,
Nor trust my feet, lest I should backward slide¹⁰ :
Sometimes in narrow straights the rocks divide,
Or, overarching, scarce divide on high,
And from the dampish ground the daylight hide :
But these once past again with gladden'd eye
I saw the rocks recede, and view'd the clear blue sky.

XIV.

And now I had arriv'd on a small plain,
A sylvan scene—a stage in my ascent;
Where feathery birch, alder, and broad-leav'd plane
A varying and refreshing shadow lent:
And these hard by, from the rude rock was sent
A stream, whose very murmur seem'd to cool;
From stone to stone in antic merriment
It danc'd and fell, regardless of all rule,
Until at last it made a bright o'erflowing pool.

XV.

Not yet the sun shone with his noontide force,
But lengthen'd shadows streak'd the dewy ground:
Toward that mountain-rill I shap'd my course:
My weary feet a cool refreshment found
In shady spots where yet the dews abound,
And the sun's heat not yet could penetrate:
I sat me down upon the stony round
That circled in the glassy pool, and straight
I drank, and felt new life my spirits animate.

XVI.

Again I stoop'd to drink, by thirst compell'd,
The crystal waves that rippled o'er the brim;
But in the uncertain waters I beheld,
Or thought I saw, reflected face and limb,
That venerable courteous Pilgrim, him
With whom I enter'd Fortune's palace bright,
But after lost amid the darkness dim,
While the rain fell in torrents. With delight
I turn'd and saw the waves had not deceiv'd my sight :

XVII.

For there indeed the reverend sire did stand
Upon a rock that o'er the waves impended,
And as he beckon'd with his aged hand
To the same eminence I soon ascended,
While he with reaching staff my steps befriended.
His face the same benignant smile still wore,
Wherein compassion was so finely blended,
That it encourag'd while it did deplore
The anxious hopeless course I follow'd evermore.

XVIII.

He saw that I would speak, but mildly thus,
 Waving his hand, he stay'd my utterance :
 " 'Tis needless each with other to discuss
 " What we have pass'd since by unseen mischance
 " We were parted while we did advance
 " Across the moor of dark Despondency,
 " A dismal wild and desolate expanse.
 " Now have we met beneath a favouring sky,
 " And Hope's pure living waters light thy fervent eye.

XIX.

" Yet follow not the path thou hast begun :
 " Not by an easy undulating road,
 " Nor 'neath the cheerful splendour of the sun
 " Canst thou escape from cold Neglect's abode."
 Then, pointing with his polish'd staff, he shew'd
 An upward craggy path, toward the source
 Whence that same little mountain torrent flow'd.
 Thither the holy Pilgrim bent his course,
 While I his upward steps pursued with all my force.

XX.

And now ascending steep we reach'd unwares
The ragged mouth of a deep gloomy cave,
That seem'd to breathe out pestilential airs,
And from its jaws all vegetation drave.
A sullen roaring, as of distant wave,
Or central cataract's dark headlong fall,
Or hollow winds that aye impetuous rave,
Was heard within : well might such sight appal
My unexpected heart, and to my guide I call.

XXI.

My faltering voice the rocks reverberate
In sounds so dreary, not my voice it seem'd;
Nor could my voice the cavern penetrate
More than the blessed light that faintly beam'd
But a few paces in, although it stream'd
Down from the noontide sun so burning bright
That all without in painful splendour gleam'd :
Darkness was there more powerful than light,
And ancient Night maintain'd her great primeval right.

XXII.

I paus'd to follow then my unaw'd guide,
Till the last glimpse of his apparel gray
Was lost in gloom. With undeterred stride
He journey'd on : at last without delay
I darted t'ward the cavern, nor would stay
Though rushing winds fierce blowing in my face
To stop my onward progress made essay ;
But when once fairly enter'd they gave place,
And reckless I pursued the Pilgrim's echoing pace.

XXIII.

Impenetrable was the gloom : the roar
Of dashing waves grew louder as we went ;
So loud, the Pilgrim's steps I heard no more,
And I seem'd left in lonesome dreriment :
But now, as if my terrors to prevent,
I felt his warm hand firmly grasping mine,
Leading me onward to his first intent.
At length methought I saw a distant shine
Of weak and darkling light with the dull gloom combine.

XXIV.

The roar was now terrific : on my ear
It beat like volleys of artillery,
As we approach'd the light, which seem'd to peer
Through a rude fissure in the roof on high.
And here methought most certain we drew nigh
The edge of some huge precipice before,
Which the vast cataract rush'd foaming by :
Such light than darkness made my terrors more,
And every step I shrunk lest we fall headlong o'er.

XXV.

At length he stay'd ; and whether that my sight
Grew stronger, or the boiling foam and spray
Reflected back the glimpses of the light,
I know not, but my eyes more clearly stray
From place to place amid the doubtful day.—
We stood upon a lofty precipice,
Just where a furious torrent made its way,
Swelling and roaring down a black abyss,
That drank with quenchless thirst vast oceans fathomless.

XXVI.

'Till it arriv'd at that same awful brink,
Smooth was the stream and steady roll'd the tide,
Nor could one floating on its surface think
That such a desperate fate would soon betide.
And there, alas ! through the half light I 'spied
Vessels full mann'd ride toward the deep profound,
And rolling down waters and darkness hide
The bark and them for ever ; while the sound
Of shrieks and timbers rent in the hoarse roar was drown'd !

XXVII.

Oh, fearful sight !—oh, horrid spectacle !
One after other o'er this hideous steep
Full many a gallant gorgeous vessel fell,
Or took in darkness a wild desperate leap ;
For rapid borne in the fierce current's sweep,
Before they fell they hung as in mid air,
Then plung'd for ever down the endless deep.
I could behold no more, in dizzy glare
My aching eyes confus'd lost every object there.

XXVIII.

The rock roll'd backward from the stagnant tide,
The tide and moving vessels seem'd to stand :
Down dropt I at the kindly Pilgrim's side,
And o'er the edge had fall'n, but his hand
Still held me with a firm and grasping band.
What after happen'd, how I left that cave,
I know not : when again I could command
My scatter'd sense, the gentle breezes lave
My heated brow, and o'er my head green branches wave.

XXIX.

The holy man beside me on the grass
Was sitting, watching with parental care
My life's return, which for a while did pass.
He smil'd to see my waken'd eyeballs stare
On him and on the prospect wide and fair,
So chang'd from what they had whilere beheld.
“ Well hast thou 'scap'd,” he said, “ for such as dare
“ Approach that gulf, or by their fate compell'd,
“ Return to light and life and happiness but seld.”

XXX.

“ It was Oblivion’s torrent hurling down
“ That precipice its huge resistless tide²¹ :
“ Through many a fair and populated town,
“ O’er many a verdant champain, open, wide,
“ It takes its course, before its waters hide
“ Their glittering face beneath the arching earth :
“ Under a constant sunshine doth it glide,
“ And from its burial upwards to its birth
“ Its surface pageants gild, its shores resound with mirth.

XXXI.

“ And ’till its burial in the yawning ground
“ ’Tis nam’d the stream of Popularity ;
“ For ever running toward that gulf profound,
“ Down which but now you saw its waters fly,
“ O’erwhelming all they bore despiteously.
“ Behind yon hill the flattering river flows,
“ Tempting each jocund voyager to try
“ Its easy stream, while every wind that blows
“ Joins with the heaving wave to lull him to repose.”

XXXII.

O'er that same gentle hill my steps he led.

Beyond I mark'd the stream of which he spake,
Watering a gladsome vale, and o'er it spread
Not like a winding river, but broad lake.

I scarcely knew if I were yet awake,
For sight so fair I seld had seen till now:

Banners and silken sails and pennants shake
In the delighted airs that freshly blow,
And the bright waves seem'd proud of every gilded prow.

XXXIII.

Yet when I watch'd more narrowly, I noted

That though the tide appear'd both smooth and fair,
And bore with little toil or none who floated
Upon its surface rippled by the air,

Strong and unlook'd-for eddies still there were,
Driving back some that had made rapid way;

Whirlpools that might deceive most heedful care,
Made not a few their miserable prey,
Their fate unheeded though in broad and open day.

XXXIV.

Full many a gorgeous pageant there I saw,
 Bright Nymphs and Tritons with their wreathed horn²²:
 Here link'd Leviathans and Dolphins draw
 A burnish'd car that glitter'd like the morn;
 There stately ships along the smooth tide borne
 Before the favouring wind; while every bark
 Some show of worldly splendour did adorn:
 And most in blind unconsciousness I mark
 Haste amid music's sound to th' abyss profound and dark.

XXXV.

It suck'd in all with greedy quenchless thirst,
 Save few who saw their danger ere too near:
 Nor was indeed their unseen fate the worst
 Who to the gulf most ignorantly steer:
 To some too late their error 'gan appear;
 And among these was seen a hideous sight,
 A dreadful conflict, agony of fear,
 Frantic despair, confusion at its height,
 'Till the increasing tide hid all in endless night.

XXXVI.

But few were they who ere too late could stem
The vigorous tide that swelling roll'd along;
And fewer still were they who, unlike them,
Had never yielded to its current strong,
But work'd against the stream through blame and wrong:
Singly they strove, and sometimes all their force
Prov'd in the end unequal, and among
The common herd they join'd the common course,
And met the common fate, Oblivion's gulf or worse.

XXXVII.

How envied I those strenuous minds obscure
That dared alone the stream to disobey;
In their own vigour diffidently sure,
Steering their course beside the vulgar way;
Their sight still fix'd on what beyond them lay,
Until at length they gain'd their glorious end,
The boast and pride of man in other day!
While thus I thought the Pilgrim reverend
Toward the river's bank his steady steps did bend:

XXXVIII.

And there arriving we beheld a boat,
A little boat—"And now we must adventure,"
The Pilgrim said, "upon this stream to float,
"To gain its farther side:—descend and enter
"This boat, that lies as though kind Heav'n had lent her."
I did, and took in hand each ready oar.
"All thy young strength is needed: in the centre
"The tide runs fiercely—reach the distant shore
"And landed we are safe from peril, not before."

XXXIX.

At first the tide was gentle, and gave time
For me to view the land we left behind.
Bright was the prospect; glittering dwellings climb
The easy eminences, all enshrin'd
In well clad woods, that now to brown inclin'd,
Contrasting richly with the herbage green:
And here and there among the meadows wind
Blithe troops of maids and youths in garments sheen,
Breaking like sunshine forth the shadowy trees between.

XL.

And while I fondly gaz'd, our little bark
Was dropping slowly down the increasing tide:
The watchful Pilgrim bade me now to mark
The reedy shores by which we backward glide,
And I the oars with all my vigour plied,
While he the steerage kept with heedful care:
Yet ere we near'd the river's farther side,
Full many dangers in our face did stare,
And but for his foresight had whelm'd us all unaware.

XLI.

The current ran indeed with vigorous might,
Yet could my strength resist its lesser force;
And as my oars were long, our boat was light,
We still had kept a constant onward course,
If sometimes vessels huge, without remorse,
Crews without heed, had not on us borne down:
The Pilgrim's skill was then our best resource,
And more preserv'd than all the strength I own
Mid the far-scattering foam that threaten'd us to drown.

XLII.

'Twas easy to endure the worldling's sneer,
 The vulgar herd's vile scoff and ridicule,
 Because we chose in our own course to steer,
 Making our true and best delight our rule;
 Had not ofttimes some self-enamour'd fool
 Essay'd in wantonness to overwhelm
 Our small frail vessel in the eddying pool;
 But aye the Pilgrim kept a watchful helm,
 And thus the perils past of this wide watery realm.

XLIII.

The river's farther side was different far
 To that rich shore that we had seen recede.
 The slimy banks at first our progress bar,
 Yet could not long such obstacle impede;
 For by the aid of many a vigorous reed,
 That flourish'd in the water's sediment,
 We mount the bank, and onward thence proceed
 Over a marshy soil, which as we went
 Rattled beneath our feet, and noisome vapours sent.

XLIV.

Not far beyond on rising ground appears
A forest black—gloomy unsightly pines:
The vegetation dank of former years
Hung ragged, matted, rotting, on the lines
Of horizontal arms; nor were there signs
Of life or freshness, save on each high head
Whereon the sun at times uncertain shines.
On all beneath a baleful blight was shed,
And wholesome light itself from this drear scene had fled.

XLV.

I felt the forest's deadening influence
While following close whereas the Pilgrim led;
A chilling dampness came o'er every sense,
And a dull gloom was o'er my spirits spread.
All sounds were silent—save beneath our tread
The crackling of the fallen branches sere,
And the sad wind that sighing overhead,
Swaying the limber pine-trees here and there,
Kept up a mournful moaning ever in the air.

XLVI.

Yet to our path arrived no gentle breath,
The heavy stagnant air to move awhile;
The very air partook the general death
That every living thing did thence exile;
Ourselves except, who journeying many a mile
At a wide valley's edge arriv'd at last,
Wherein we saw a huge and antique pile,
In wild decay, irregular and vast,
Whose dismal lofty towers around dim horror cast.

XLVII.

And though from height this structure I beheld,
My wandering sight could not the whole include:
The gloom of shadowy wood my eye repell'd
From portions that I then most nearly view'd;
High Moorish towers, black, ponderous, and rude,
Involv'd elsewhere the pile within their shade,
And all appear'd one desert solitude.
Age-stricken oaks their giant arms display'd
O'er courts where once a host embattled stood array'd.

XLVIII.

Thus nature once more triumph'd over art ;
The ivy's weight dragg'd down the mouldering wall,
And lowly shrubs intrude on every part :
Where erst the barb'd portcullis wont to fall,
Huge stones had chok'd the gate and brushwood small :
No sign of life was seen on any side,
But grim destruction trampled upon all ;
More deadly seeming from the pompous pride
Of that deserted pile in elder happier tide.

XLIX.

All this I saw descending. The deep shade
Of massive towers that flank'd the outer gate
Involv'd me soon ; and now a pause I made,
Aw'd by a scene so grand and desolate.
Then turning slowly round, I thought to wait
For my kind guide, the Pilgrim grey and old,
Who stay'd behind as if in self-debate :
But whether the deep shadows might infold
Him in their solemn gloom, I could him not behold.

L.

Round every part of that vast antique pile,
Round every part my sight that could include,
I cast my anxious eyes, in hope the while
To see the Pilgrim from the masses rude
Emerging soon; yet wheresoe'er I view'd
I saw him not. Full suddenly then greet
My vacant ear in that still solitude
The grateful sounds of varying music sweet,
As of some harp or lyre struck in that lone retreat.

LI.

Not sad, I ween, nor joyous was the note:
A bold inspiring animating sound,
That set the moveless air in waves afloat,
Swelling and rich, harmonious and round.
Now 'neath the vigorous touch the cords rebound,
And the notes strike full on my charmed ear;
And now retire, as if the music wound
Far off among the towers and ruins drear,
Then rapidly approach, distinct, impetuous, clear.

LII.

Not long I listen'd : through the tower-flank'd gate,
 Chok'd by the brushwood small and mouldering stone,
 I made my way into the court-yard straight,
 Where sitting 'mid the ruins wild, alone,
 Beneath the drooping ivy overgrown,
 I saw a lovely lady, whose fair hand
 Stray'd o'er a golden harp : its sweetest tone
 Seem'd breath'd in gratitude, so it might stand
 Within her lov'd embrace and sound at her command.

LIII.

Gracefully fell her bright apparel down
 In chaste simplicity of ancient guise,
 And on her ample brow a laurel crown
 Shadow'd the lustre of her open eyes.
 A bay-tree, ever green, the poet's prize,
 Flourish'd beside her, of its leaves profuse.
 I started back in dread yet glad surprise,
 For well I knew it was the Poet's Muse,
 To gain whose favouring smile no toils would I refuse.

LIV.

She saw me hesitate, and at her look

Upon my bended knee I humbly fell :

Then from the verdant bay one leaf she took,

And me approaching, thus she said : “ Full well

“ I know what thou would'st here ; nor need'st thou tell

“ How thou cam'st here : thy purpose high I love,

“ That scorns thy soul at lower rate to sell

“ Than its true worth, and holds itself above

“ The mercenary throng, who only live and move !

LV.

“ I have been with thee 'mid thy toils and pains,

“ And in disguise thus far thy strength have tried ;

“ But a severer test behind remains

“ Than those thou suffer'dst with thy Pilgrim guide.

“ This drear domain, these ruins scatter'd wide

“ Are the abode of pining Poverty ;

“ And haply here must thou long time abide.

“ In my own shape I'll bear thee company :—

“ The present Muse alone can cheer thy misery !

LVI.

- “ But she shall cheer thee in thy troubled way,
 “ Lessen all griefs, make all misfortunes light.
 “ Take then this leaf of ever-verdant bay;
 “ One look on it shall make thy prospects bright,
 “ And turn thy deepest sorrow to delight!
 “ Yet want and penury must fill thy story;
 “ And though these realms may seem unpeopled quite,
 “ Yet are they fill’d with bards of fairest glory,
 “ And therefore men it call ‘The Poet’s Purgatory.’ ”

LVII.

Thus spake the Muse: with grateful fervent tears
 I bath’d the hem of her white flowing stole,
 And vow’d that ever in my after years
 To her alone I would devote my soul:
 Nor sought she then my ardour to controul,
 But gently rais’d me from my kneeling place.
 Into my breast the leaf of bay I stole;
 My worst misgivings it soon put to chase,
 And with the Muse I held high converse face to face.

END OF THE FOURTH CANTO.

NOTES.

¹ IN his 32d Sonnet, Shakspeare complains that his Muse had not "grown with the growing age." I am happy that with respect to Mr. Wordsworth the age has already in some degree "grown with his growing Muse."

² Chaucer, in his *Assemblie of Foules*, speaks of

"The bilder oke, and eke the hardie ashe,
"The piller elme," &c.

³ Petrarch applied the same wish differently:

———"passar mio tempo homai * *
"Senz' altro studio, e senza novi ingegni."
Canz. cxx. edit. Ald.

"Whereof I had so inly great pleasure,
"That as methought I surely ravish'd was
"Into Paradise, where my desire
"Was for to be, and no further passe," &c.

CHAUCER'S *Floure and the Leafe*.

⁴ Speaking of the object of poetry, Sir-P. Sidney says, "The final end is to lead and draw us to as high a perfection as our degenerate souls, made worse by their clay lodgings, can be capable of."—*Defence of Poesie*.

Si che vostr' arte a Dio quasi è nipote.—DANTE, *Inf.* Canto xi.

George Chapman, in one of the Sonnets prefixed to his translation of the *Iliad*, thus tersely enumerates the excellencies of poetry:

"Virtue, in all things else at best, she betters,
"Honour she heightens, and gives life in death."

⁵ "Homai convien che tu cosi ti spoltre;
"Disse 'l Maestro, che seggendo in piuma
"In fama non si vien, nè sotto coltre."

DANTE, *Inf.* Canto xxiv.

⁶ "By our own spirits are we deified:

"We poets in our youth begin in gladness,

"But thereof comes in the end despondency and madness."

WORDSWORTH'S *Lyrical Ballads*.

⁷ In reference to the sentiment expressed in note 5, Dante, in the same canto, says,

“ *Sanza laqual chi sua vita consuma*
 “ *Cotal vestigio in terra di se lascia*
 “ *Qual fumo in aere, et in acqua la schiuma.*”

⁸ This anecdote is told in most of the common biographies of Dante: it refers to Cane de la Scala, who, in the first instance, patronised the poet. The jester, however, on many occasions was preferred by his lord; and Dante once observed to a friend in consequence: “You will not be surprised at this treatment when you consider that similarity of manners is the firmest bond of affection.” The poet’s proud spirit lost him his patron.

⁹ Fuller, in his *Worthies* (as has been repeatedly told) charges Lord Burleigh with intercepting the bounty of the Queen to Spenser: when ordered to pay a certain sum, the Lord Treasurer observed, “What all this for a song?” Some doubt has, however, been thrown upon this anecdote.

¹⁰ “Herself a recompence sufficient
 “Unto herself to give her own content.”

DANIEL’S *Musophilus*.

¹¹ In the introduction to Book II. of his *Reason of Church Government*, Milton speaks thus of his inaptitude to prose composition: “I should not chuse this manner of writing, “wherein I know myself to be inferior to myself, led by the genial power of nature to “another task.” The “cool element of prose” was not that in which he felt at home: he always desired to be in “the high region of fancies, with garlands and singing robes “about him.”

¹² “The learned Jonson,” in his *Sejanus*, so far takes advantage of this fact, that in Act 5 is a scene of a sacrifice to Fortune by the hero.

¹³ Boiardo, *Orl. Inn.* C. xvi. says of Fortune’s gate,
 “*Che la porta apre d’improviso e serra.*”

My object has been in some degree to follow the proverb, by shewing that self-confidence gives the first claim upon the bounty of Fortune.

¹⁴ *Ecce vir fortis ac strenuus, ipsam hostis sui victoriam vicit.*—SEN. *Ep.* 9.
Vides quanto facilius sit totam gentem quam unum virum vincere.—IBID.

¹⁵ See Milton’s *Lycidas*:

“Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise,” &c.

————— “on earth less known,
 “Where glory is false glory, attributed
 “To things not glorious, men not worthy fame.”

Par. Reg. iii. l. 68.

¹⁶ " And it shall come to pass that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall
" into the pit."—*Isaiah* c. xxiv. v. 18.

¹⁷ " Eagles commonly fly alone ; they are crows,
" Daws, and starlings flock together."

WEBSTER'S *Duchess of Malfi*. A. v. sc. 1.

¹⁸ " His herte was bathed in a bathe of blisse."

CHAUCER, *W. of Bath's Tale*.

" But ye lovers that bathen in gladnesse."

CHAUCER, *B. of Troilus*. L. i. st. 4.

¹⁹ These are they whose names Ariosto represents Time burying in oblivion :

" *Degli altrui nomi egli s'empia il mantello*

" *Scemava il monte, e non finiva mai ;*

" *Ed in quel fiume, che Lete si noma,*

" *Scarcava, anzi perdea la ricca soma.*"

Orl. Fur. C. xxxv. st. 11.

Davenant, in *Gondibert*, well calls such works

" The monuments of banish'd minds."

²⁰ ————" *E tra i rocchi de lo scoglio*

" *Lo piè senza la man non si spedia.*"

DANTE, *Inf.* C. xxvi.

²¹ Not the same "oblivious stream" mentioned by the Italian :

———" *abbiate avvertenza e discrezione*

" *Che presso è il fiume de la oblivione.*"

BOIARDO, *Orl. Inn.* C. ix.

²² " Of them the shepherd which hath charge in chief,

" Is Triton blowing loud his wreathed horn."

SPENSER'S *Colin Clout*.

THE END.

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